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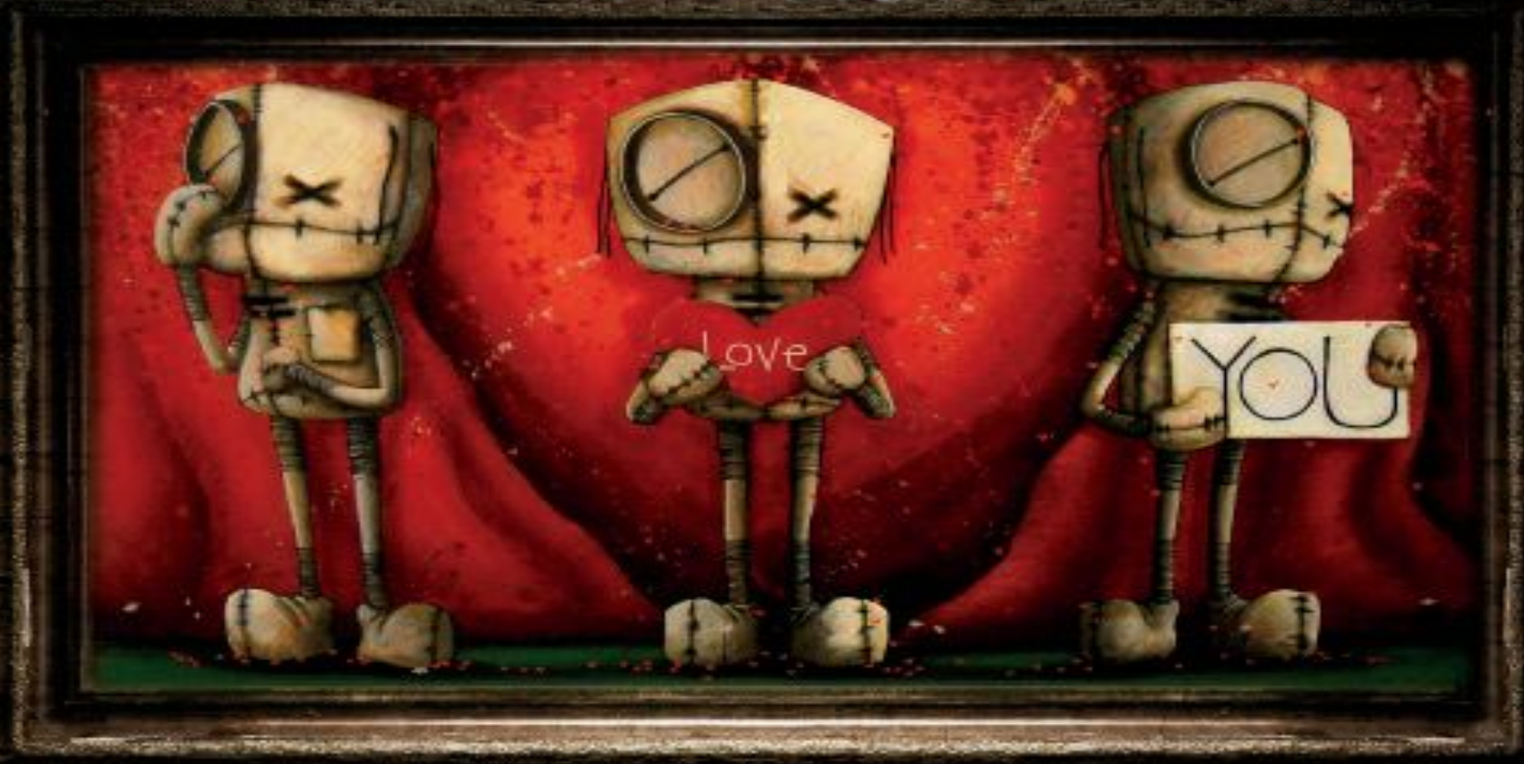

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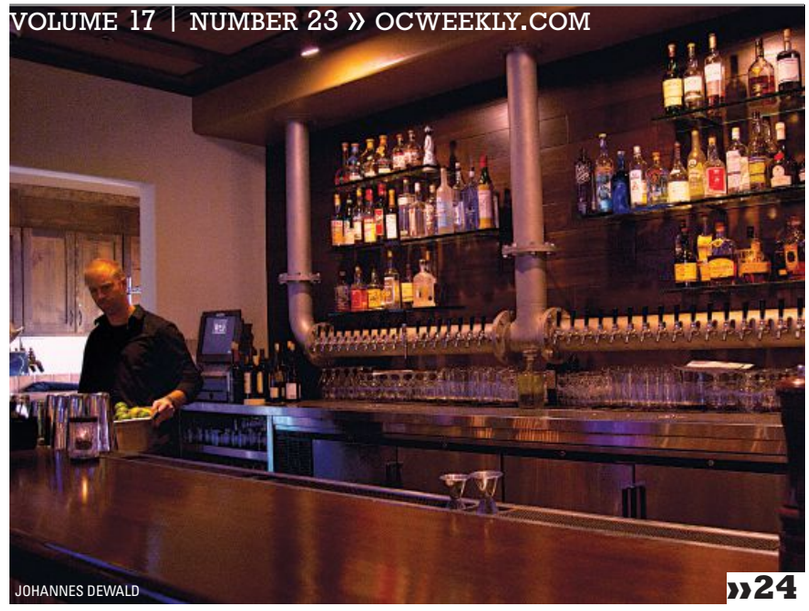
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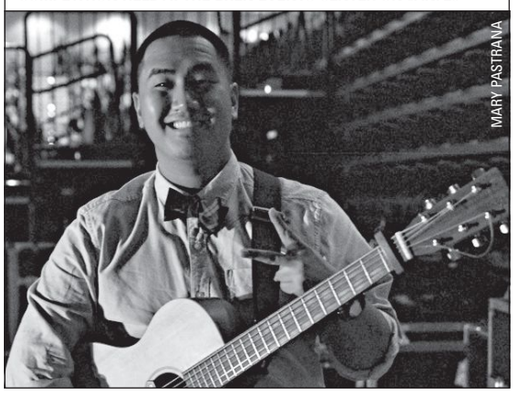
OCWEEKLY.COM/SLIDESHOW

JR AQUINO GETS READY TO STRUM AT THE VIBE DANCE COMPETITION HELD AT THE BREN EVENTS CENTER ON JAN. 29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"u need to educate urself stupid f@3k, low iq republican sh6t."

—"Rsargiss" responding to Matt Coker's Jan. 26 Navel Gazing post "Orly Taitz Delusional Quote of the Day"

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letters »

"If you want to see true Occupy activism, go north of the nasty, wimpy Orange Curtain."

A LITTLE UNITY, PLEASE

Let's hope American Arabs in Anaheim can overcome the divisions that have destroyed Chicago's community, fractured Detroit's and made the New York/New Jersey ones irrelevant and ineffective when it comes to national politics [Gabriel San Roman's "Little Arabia Grows Up," Jan. 27]. It would be nice to have one success in this country after 152 years of being here.

Ray Hanania, via ocweekly.com

STORMING OF THE BASTILLE, THIS IS NOT

Fuck Orange County, the worst place for social activism in America [Brandon Ferguson's "Courting Disaster," Jan. 27]. The article couldn't have put it better: "Rather than a boisterous crowd of angry 99-percenters threatening to storm the halls of injustice, passersby were greeted with hackneyed street theater." Disgusting. If you want to see true Occupy activism, go north of the nasty, wimpy Orange Curtain. As a matter of fact, go anywhere but here.

DJ Justice, via ocweekly.com

The main point of Occupy activism is to get public attention to turn to the real issues that Occupy Wall Street affiliates target. For about a year before Occupy began, the main economic proposals being considered addressed fake issues (such as the supposed need to cut the deficit—except for defense spending and tax cuts for the wealthy) during a recession.

Occupy changed that. The big question now is: How do we keep it fresh and interesting? The smaller question is: Is it necessary to only do the best and biggest events, or are there other paths?

The genius of Occupy Wall Street was that it was not a one-day event, but a continuing one, which gave the persistent message that something was out of place. And New York, just as was the case in Oakland, was a place where getting arrested and/or beaten up by cops was a way to attract new people, media attention and public sympathy.

That was not going to work in Orange County. Occupy Santa Ana gave it a valiant try, and most OC residents recoiled from the civil disobedience. Many people move here to get away from that sort of thing. Civil disobedience is a valid tactic, and it has its place—I don't knock it. But it's not the only path to reach public consciousness. Another is sheer persistence—simply lasting for a long time. That gets noticed, while creating a base for individual, person-to-person activism that doesn't make headlines.

Orange County is, from what I can tell, the second-longest occupation in the U.S. You can disparage it if you want, but you're holding us to an unreasonably high standard. I don't take slaps at *OC Weekly* for not being a bigger enterprise; it does fairly well for its environment. So does Occupy OC. And we're doing it at a time when Occupation in many parts of the country is fallow.

As has been mentioned, the continuous occupation is just one aspect of what is going on. I hope that D'Marie Mulattieri and those working with her are very successful with one-day marches. I hope the Sustainability Group and the anti-Foreclosure Group and the Move Your Money group all have great success. We're all paddling in pretty much the same direction, after all. But despite our "failure" to close down the Federal Building (and did you really think we were trying to close down a federal building?), people came out and had a good time and reached a lot of people. It's not Tahrir Square—but then, it doesn't have to be, does it?

Occupy OC will show itself to have been a modest evergreen that sustained itself all winter. You can celebrate that, or you can mock it. I celebrate it. It's better than what would be happening otherwise. The struggle continues.

Greg Diamond, via ocweekly.com

Brandon is cracking us up with his agenda. I hope he was trying to spur us on. Storming the Ronald Reagan Federal Building was not on the day's agenda. Sorry, it just wasn't. Theater, guest speakers, community marching were on the agenda in order to gather support and create unity for future actions "within the system." Occupy is a multilevel occupation, not a merit badge for popping up tents—within the system, outside the system, over and under the system. Brandon, every time I saw you that day, you were shaking your head. Were you hoping for more or less?

S.A. Artist, via ocweekly.com

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Attorney for the Damned

Veteran criminal-defense lawyer John D. Barnett insists his cop client didn't murder Kelly Thomas

BARNETT REPRESENTING GANG-RAPIST IN HAIDL AFFAIR

OC WEEKLY ARCHIVE PHOTO
YGNACIO NANETTI/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER POOL PHOTOGRAPHER

District Attorney Tony Rackauckas will fail to convict two Fullerton police officers charged with felonies as a result of the July 2011 beating death of Kelly Thomas, a 36-year-old, unarmed homeless man.

That's not my guess, but rather the confident prediction of John D. Barnett, the veteran criminal-defense attorney for Manuel Ramos, who is facing a second-degree murder charge.

While it's commonplace for defense lawyers to belittle prosecutors and inflate their own courtroom prowess, Barnett isn't a cheap publicity hound. Indeed, journalists such as myself who've covered his trials quickly learn he's a superb, gentlemanly lawyer who can play hardball when necessary. I haven't always agreed with his interpretations of evidence, but it would be foolish to not pay attention when he speaks. Few, if any, other lawyers in the region understand the minute legal angles that can produce victories from defenses that once seemed impossible.

moxley confidential

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

We recently ran into each other at Orange County's central courthouse, and he politely but firmly lectured me on the media's role in having convinced the public that Ramos is a monster.

"What is reported has a tremendous impact," he said.

True enough: Based on the facts provided by Rackauckas, who says he was disgusted by an unnecessary killing, and the photograph of Thomas' gruesomely battered face after six cops finished with him, I've labeled the police savage killers worthy of public contempt. I've even praised the DA for filing felony charges against Ramos and his colleague, Jay Cicinelli.

But Barnett believes I've reached faulty conclusions based on misinformation.

"It [the Thomas killing] didn't happen the way Mr. Rackauckas said it happened," said Barnett, a Laguna Beach-based lawyer who specializes in defending Southern California police officers accused of wrongdoing. "I think a lot of people are going to be surprised when they learn the facts."

In Barnett's view, the biggest misconceptions involve his client. He thinks Rackauckas erred by giving the impression that Ramos was beating the hell out of Thomas to the very end of the incident. That the DA filed the most serious charge against this cop underscores the notion that he is the most responsible for the death.

But according to Barnett, video evidence proves that none of the final blows to Thomas' head during the later portion of the beating was made by Ramos.

"He was holding his feet," he said.

Two veteran law-enforcement sources familiar with the evidence in the case confirmed Barnett's assertion. Said one of them, "Ramos was nowhere near [Thomas'] head at the end. He's kneeling at his feet. He's exhausted [from the beating], but he's not striking any of the final blows."

If those characterizations are accurate, Barnett—who helped LAPD officer Theodore Briseno win an acquittal in the infamous Rodney King beating that sparked the 1992 LA riots—may have a significant point to argue to a jury.

But Susan Kang Schroeder, the DAs chief of staff, dismisses the angle.

"That's true [that Ramos wasn't beating Thomas at the end]," said Schroeder. "So what? Tony's never said he hit him the whole time. His point is that once you set something criminal in motion, you are responsible for all of the acts."

Barnett isn't claiming that Ramos was a relatively uninvolved participant in the killing of Thomas, an incident that began, according to law-enforcement records, with a telephone complaint about the homeless man to police by an employee at Fullerton's Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen. He acknowledges that Ramos was a key player from the outset, but, he says, the officer used the force necessary to gain control of "a violent, struggling" suspect, who suffered from schizophrenia. Michael D. Schwartz, Cicinelli's defense attorney, supports that argument.

A second Rackauckas error was doctoring Ramos' pre-beating quote, according to Barnett. At his September press conference announcing the arrests of the two cops, the DA won international attention by telling reporters that Ramos slowly put on gloves as he towered over Thomas and said, "See my fists? They are getting ready to fuck you up!"

"That's not what he said," Barnett told me. "What he said was, 'See my fists? They are getting ready to fuck you up *if you don't comply or do what I say*" [his emphasis].

To the defense lawyer, the additional words make a huge difference because "It's clear that police officers have every right to use force or the threat of force to gain compliance in certain situations," he said. "The evidence will show that Kelly Thomas kept fighting and the officers were surprised by his strength."

Again, Schroeder disputes the defense angle.

"Yeah, Tony didn't give a blow-by-blow of what everybody said during his speech, but we put up [on a screen at the press conference] all the statements. We aren't trying to hide anything."

Barnett's most controversial lines of defense are going to generate intense ridicule among the thousands of people who protested the killing because he will give a future jury an unflattering portrait of Thomas as a man who posed a threat to the cops' safety. He said the victim had a 1995 violence-related conviction, was a thief and—are you ready for a bombshell assertion?—carried a hatchet.

I made sure I correctly heard the claim.

"He was known to carry a hatchet," Barnett repeated.

Ron Thomas, the victim's father, has acknowledged to the *Weekly* that defense lawyers will try to taint his son, but he's labeled the accusation that Kelly was violent "a lie."

In the aftermath of the Thomas killing, Ramos received death threats and was forced to live in hiding. There were also reports that he was placed on a suicide watch at one point. This is where Barnett returns to his position that members of the media have unfairly inflamed passions against his client.

"Look, this image of my client being violence prone is wrong," he said. "In fact, the truth is just the opposite. This is a guy who had a reputation for not being tough enough."

Barnett also says there is a potent, pro-defense point that's looming.

"We don't know the cause of death," he said.

His point is that if the coroner can't say which blows caused Thomas' death, then how can a jury confidently assign responsibility beyond a reasonable doubt?

I tried to follow up, but he cut me off.

In the Rodney King case, Barnett managed to convert alarming bystander video of the beating into an asset for the cops. In the infamous Haidl gang-rape trials involving the spoiled teenage son of an assistant Orange County sheriff, he attempted but failed to prove that an unconscious 16-year-old girl deviously orchestrated her own rape. Now, in the Thomas killing, there's sensational video of cops beating a man to death. None of us knows if Barnett can turn Exhibit 1 in the prosecution's case into a defense asset, but we know he's going to give it his best shot.

"It's going to be very interesting," he said.

The show begins March 28 at a preliminary hearing, at which Rackauckas will battle the defense to determine if the government's case reaches minimum standards to proceed to trial. Don't paint the often-colorless DA as the underdog, though. Three decades ago, as a hotshot, rising prosecutor, he was good enough to convict an innocent man of murder.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

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¡ask a mexican!®

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

DEAR MEXICAN: My cousin had put a picture on Facebook that said, "I will not be forced to learn a foreign language to accommodate illegals in my country." He's Mexican-American. Our family is from La Luz, Zacatecas, and its surrounding villages. His dad (my uncle) was born in El Paso, Texas. His mom jumped into the conversation and backed him up. His parents are divorced. How do I politely tell them they are wrong with their way of thinking?

Prepared to Punch a Pinche Pocho Primo

DEAR WAB: Sorry, *cabrón*, but you're just not going to win this battle. As much as I and other Chicano yaktivists would love it if everyone of Mexican descent in this country were a card-carrying member of the *Reconquista* complete with Nahuatl names and a Frida-filled house, that's just not going to happen. As I've explained *muchos* times before, the great thing about this country is how it can turn the descendents of even the biggest wab into an anti-immigrant loon by the second generation (see: Marco Rubio) and even by the first (see: my parents). The best you can do is remind your cousin that your grandparents came to this country to find a better life and to not talk trash on those less fortunate than they—but, again, it's a losing battle that goes contrary to the American immigrant experience, which sees the previous generation of immigrants spit on newcomers as though they were a spittoon. So can I suggest something revolutionary, instead? Leave your *primo* to his opinions. Let him be a *prieto* Know Nothing. You be the conscious cousin, and let him be the *pocho* one—trust me, you'll get all the hot second cousins at the family *pachangas*, while he'll be condemned to be the Tio Taco of El Paso.

DEAR MEXICAN: You explain the etymology of words so well! Please enlighten your readers with the explanation of the word *prieto*, as opposed to *moreno*.

La Que le Gustan los Morenos

DEAR SHE WHO LIKES BROWN-SKINNED MEN: *Prieto* is derived from *apretar* ("tighten"), from the Late Latin *appectorāre* ("to press against one's chest"), but in Mexico, it denotes a dark hue, one veering on blackness. *Moreno*, on the other hand, comes from *moro*, the Spanish word for Moor, and usually signifies a dark brown—you know, like a Moor! (How we got *prieto* to mean "blackish" from its pressing roots escapes me—because of bruising?). But these are general definitions, as their meanings shift across the color prism depending on who's talking and what century. In the present day, *prieto* is usually reserved as a term for parents to describe their darkest-skinned kid, a description as injurious to a young soul as calling him "tubby" or "Newt Gingrich."

TO VIKKI CARR: I've received autographed books by legendary playwright David Mamet, was able to interview Louie Perez and David Hidalgo of Los Lobos in front of a live audience in Oakland, have had Cheech Marin enthusiastically shake my hand and proclaim himself a fan—the celebrity readers of this *columna* and their generosity toward me knows no bounds. But to get an autographed glossy photo of you thanking me for my work? You've made this *hombre* blush enough to last the year. *Gracias* for the kind words, as well as for being such a great role model for our community. *¡Eres chingona!*

ASK THE MEXICAN

at themexican@askamexican.net, be his fan on Facebook, follow him on Twitter or ask him a video question at youtube.com/askamexicano!

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

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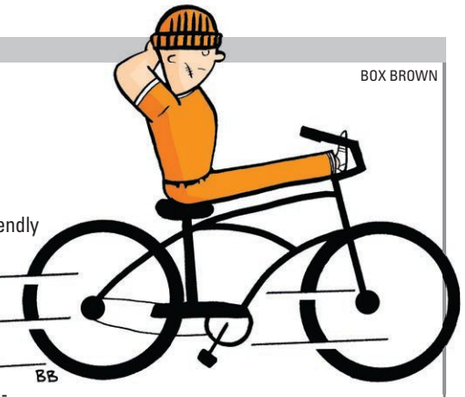

The Bicycle Thief

Long Beach is one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in the U.S.—with a high rate of bicycle theft. In the past three months, my son has had two stolen and I've had one disappear. We are not wealthy, and this has put us in a bind. Our bicycles are fun, friendly, environmentally sound and an economical mode of transportation. If you needed a bike so bad, you could have asked. I would have found a way to help you get mobile. I've helped people in need in my community before. Now, since my partner and I are both out of work, a new (or even used) bicycle is out of the question. If you find yourself reading this and feel like your karma could use a little help, please return my all-black, eight-speed beach cruiser by 3G, with its back bookrack (curved outer pillars) and night running lights, to the rack at the Ralphs on Fourth. Oh, and please lock it—I'm pretty handy and can get a lock off, as well. Just leave a note on it so I know it's mine. I would appreciate it and might just help you find one of your own if you feel like giving me your contact information. If not, I hope you get a good price and the money goes to help you out of whatever situation brought you to needing my bike so badly.

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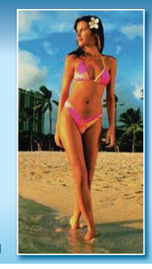

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COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

How Long Beach's botched marijuana lottery screwed its winners and losers alike

BY NICK SCHOU

EXCEPT FOR the oversized green cross painted on the wall and the acrylic sign with the olive-colored marijuana seed inside the letter O, Avalon Wellness Collective looks exactly like all the other razor-wire-topped, one-story buildings that line the west side of the 710 freeway. Six months ago, the 8,000-square-foot, charcoal-gray building, located in an industrial neighborhood of north-central Long Beach, was just an empty warehouse; now, a state-of-the-art, one-stop cannabis cultivation-and-distribution center operates inside, built to exacting city specifications.

The front door didn't open until last summer, when it was carved into the front of the building. A burly guard sits on a stool. Behind him, another security door leads to what turns out to be a "man-trap": once the first door closes, visitors are locked inside a chamber until they're buzzed through. Beyond that, in the actual dispensary area, jars of organic medicine previously tested for pesticides, mold and E. coli are neatly arranged inside a glass-topped display case. A flat-screen television stretches across one wall, and watching everything from a ceiling corner is a tilt-pan, zoom-lens security camera.

Nearly half the sprawling structure is divided between a vegetation area, a hydroponics set-up, and a large worktable at which several seated employees trim bags of recently harvested product. It's like a scene out of Detroit at the height of its automotive might, except rolling off the assembly line here is marijuana. In one corner, there's an Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant bathroom, as well as a fire exit that leads to an alley. A locked side door embedded in an 8-inch-thick wall leads to Avalon's marijuana-cultivation area. In the hallway a few feet to the right of this door is the grow room, where 90 plants flower beneath sodium heat lamps. If the carbon monoxide levels in this room exceed 2,000 parts per million, horns blare and blue strobe lights turn on as intake and exhaust fans cycle fresh air into the room. From the ceiling of a separate curing room hang a few dozens plants cloned from strains with names such as Avalon White Chunk, Diesel Alien and Tar Dog.

Everything within the walls of this building materialized in less than 90 days last summer, thanks to Trojan Builders' Chris Cantella, whose regular work is a bit more rarified; a Newport Beach mansion he constructed won a seven-page spread in the August 2010 edition of *Better Homes and Gardens*. But the developer is proud of this dispensary, not least because he completed it just in time to qualify for a crucial certificate of occupancy from the city of Long Beach that makes it currently legal. Cantella estimates he has sunk at least $400,000 into the construction project, money he can ill-afford to gamble: When the real-estate market bubble collapsed in 2008, his earnings dropped from $3 million per year to nothing.

"We had every city inspector here," he says. "It was a long, tedious process, but we stuck in there and jumped through every hoop. I'm only here because the city of Long Beach opened the front door and said, 'Come on down.'"

But the city's commitment to medical marijuana wasn't as solid as Cantella had assumed. In the fall of 2011, just as Avalon Wellness Collective opened its doors, Long Beach began considering a ban on medical marijuana despite having legalized collectives a year earlier. City attorney Robert Shannon led the charge, citing an ongoing federal crackdown on storefront dispensaries in California that has seen the Obama administration launch unexpected raids and property seizures against growers and landlords. Shannon also cited a lawsuit filed by Ryan Pack and Anthony Gayle, two patients who had obtained cannabis from two clubs that failed to win in a controversial Nov. 20, 2010, lottery run by city bureaucrats, which picked several dozen locations (including Avalon Wellness Center) for permits to open dispensaries; those that didn't win were raided and shut down. According to the plaintiffs, the city has no right to regulate a substance that is illegal under federal law.

So far, the council has voted twice to delay its vote, but if it bans storefront dispensaries, it will hardly be the most bizarre turn of events in Long Beach's surreal war on weed, one in which the council members who favor medical marijuana voted against legalizing it, and those opposed to legalization voted yes,

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

JOSH HOWARD AT AVALON WELLNESS COLLECTIVE

Photographs by MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

» FROM PAGE 11

and where the city rakes in millions in pot-related fees and fines, simultaneously permitting and prosecuting various cannabis clubs. Perhaps the least surprising detail is that the FBI is reportedly investigating allegations of official corruption in Long Beach.

If anyone personifies the transition from good to bad vibes that has befallen Long Beach's ill-fated foray into the medical-marijuana business, it's John Morris. The silver-haired ex-rugby player in his early 60s has a vaguely English accent; his tendency to end sentences with words such as "babe" and "love" betrays his Liverpudlian roots. After emigrating, Morris settled in Long Beach in 1972; seven years later, he opened the famed Legends Sports Bar on Second Street in Belmont Shore. In 1988, he pioneered the revival of Pine Street by opening Mum's, an upscale steakhouse and jazz bar, and later Smooth's Sports Grille, which closed in 2010, owing the city $147,000 in unpaid loans.

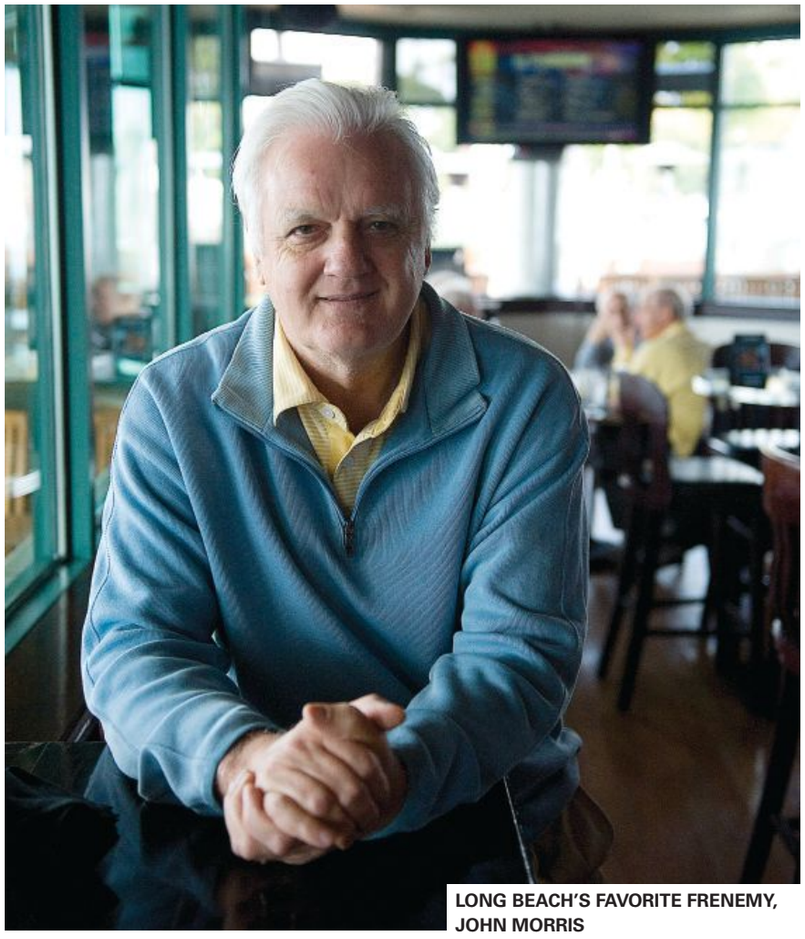
For several years, Morris served as the president of Downtown Long Beach Associates, often clashing with the city over redevelopment, but also charming much of city hall—as well as the newsroom of the *Long Beach Press Telegram* and other local publications. If he was one of the most powerful businessmen in Long Beach, he was also one of the most outspoken, especially against the city's centerpiece redevelopment project of the 1990s, the Pike at Rainbow Harbor.

In 2008, amidst the overall economic downturn that began that year, Morris became eager to explore medical marijuana. He'd recently lost a friend to prostate cancer, and he'd seen how well cannabis had treated the pain. In a recent interview at McKenna's On the Bay, where Morris now works as a manager, he recalled being struck by the thought that he was the perfect guy to implement the city's plan to allow dispensaries to operate in the city as a way to welcome much-needed tax revenue.

His pitch to City Hall: work with someone you know, rather than open the door to strangers from out of town who might turn out to be shady characters. "How are we going to make this truly work in Long Beach so it's not gangbangers doing it?" Morris figured. "Let's bring the community into this thing so everyone knows who we are."

Since marijuana collectives aren't allowed to make a profit in California, Morris says, he planned to open at least four different storefronts throughout the city, each affiliated with a nearby charity, including Long Beach Memorial Foundation; the city's skate-park program, run by ex-councilman Mike Donelon; and Long Beach Gay and Lesbian Center, whose director, Ron Sylvester, recalls talking to Morris and being excited about the concept.

"I brought it to our board of directors and got back to John and told him that we'd love to be a beneficiary," Sylvester says. "I kept an eye on what was happening legislatively, and, of course, we're disappointed that it hasn't come to fruition."



LONG BEACH'S FAVORITE FRENEMY, JOHN MORRIS

When he met with city attorney Shannon about the project, Morris brought his lobbyist, Matt Knabe, whose father, Don Knabe, sits on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Shannon informed Morris that state law prohibited him from opening multiple stores. "The whole concept was odd to me because state law is very clear that you can't make a profit," Shannon says.

Morris decided that Shannon had no right to tell him what to do. "As we left that meeting, I said, 'Fuck this,'" Morris recalls. "I've got plenty of friends in town who are believers in this stuff, so I went out and talked to 10 or 12 of my buddies."

He formed an investment group called SJK—an acronym using his own first initial, plus those belonging to two of his friends and fellow investors, Stu Ledsam and Kurt Schneider. Then Morris set about finding properties throughout the city where SJK could grow and distribute medical marijuana via six supposedly separate collectives.

Because the city required at least three individuals to be on the permit application paperwork for each collective, Morris gathered 18 people and convinced them to lend their names to the various collectives. He hired a lawyer, Paul Violas, to draw up the articles of corporation and assemble the complex application materials: dozens of pages of personal disclosure forms, rules, regulations and checklists, each requiring the initials of the collective's trio of managing members.

To create a nonprofit called the Fourth Street Collective at 1069 Wardlow St., Morris reached out to Christine Donelon, wife of the former city councilman who ran the skate-park charity Morris hoped to fund. Another was tax accountant Osvaldo Lainez, who handled returns for both Morris and Dee Andrews, a Long Beach councilman. Lainez is also the president of the nonprofit Chicar, which has won tens of thousands of dollars in Port of Long Beach donations, ostensibly for helping to organize the city's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade, which is steered by Andrews.

The six collectives Morris wanted to open hardly represented a monopoly of the clubs that filed applications for permits in early 2010, however. As the city attorney's office realized how many storefronts hoped to open, panic spread. Deputy City Attorney Michael Mais hit upon a plan: hold a lottery to randomly select locations that could then continue the permitting process. According to Mais, the city had successfully used a lottery to allocate flight spots at the tiny Long Beach Airport.

"We wanted to limit the number of dispensaries," Mais recalls. "We had two choices. We could have a lottery, which I thought was very fair, or we could go with whoever turned their application in first, which I don't think anyone could say was fair."

As the early summer 2010 filing deadline loomed for collectives that wished to get into the lottery, Morris and Violas summoned the SJK group together for a meeting at Smooth's. Unfortunately, not everyone could make the meeting or otherwise be found in time. So with their permission, Morris signed their names himself.

So did his employee, Josh Howard, a onetime marijuana-collective owner who worked for Morris. On the day the applications were due, Morris called Howard. "I need you to start signing signatures," Morris told him. "Half of these people are out of town or I can't get ahold of them—one guy's out of the country."

Morris and Howard drove to City Hall, scribbling whatever signatures and initials they could find. They parked outside, and Morris went upstairs with a stack of papers while Howard continued to sign names. The *Weekly* obtained all the applications from the city via a California Public Records Act request, and Howard pointed out which signatures he'd forged. The illegible wavy lines were easy for him to identify; he pointed out several items that he and Morris forgot to initial.

Although Morris readily admits he was involved in no less than six different collectives, because his name wasn't listed as a managing member of any of them, it didn't violate the city's ordinance, according to Mais. "To a certain extent, we rely on the honesty of the people we are dealing with," he explains. "As long as their name isn't listed as a management member, we have no way of knowing. You have to assume they are following the rules."

On Sept. 20, 2010, the city of Long Beach held a lottery to determine which of the several dozen marijuana collectives that had paid the roughly $15,000 upfront application fee would be eligible to receive a permit allowing them to operate in the city. It was a fiasco. The city had spent several thousand dollars on a machine designed to randomly choose Ping-Pong balls stenciled with a combination of numbers and letters, each pertaining to a different collective, but the balls were too big, so officials had to toss them into a recycling bin and hand-select them.

Not surprisingly, the carnival-type atmosphere led to immediate claims that the lottery was rigged, recalls Mais, who takes responsibility for the process. "The people who won the lottery thought it was fair, and the people who lost it thought it was unfair," he says. "Other than the fact that the lottery machine failed to work, the lottery was as straight up as any lottery that was ever done. We bent over backward to take any sort of unfairness out of it. We spent a ton of money. It was unfortunate it turned out the way it did because it was embarrassing."

Morris, who didn't attend the event, recalls receiving text messages each time one of his collectives won the lottery; five of the six locations he'd lined up were selected. "Everybody fucking thinks we fixed that thing," he jokes. "If Shannon had his way, he'd have made sure those balls of ours would never come to the top. . . . The vast majority of management people at City Hall, they don't like me, and I don't like them."

As soon as the city held the lottery, however, it revised its marijuana ordinance. The law already required cannabis clubs to be farther than 1,500 feet from a high school and 1,000 feet from any kindergarten, elementary, middle or junior-high school or other dispensary. To these, the city added that no club could be within 1,000 feet of a park or beach. Because Long Beach is on the ocean and full of parks, the list of eligible storefronts shrank considerably.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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AVALON COLLECTIVE'S VALERIE CRIST

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

» FROM PAGE 12

Thanks to the new buffer zones, numerous clubs that had won the lottery were now ineligible for a city permit after all, including one operated by Morris. Meanwhile, the city kept adding new construction prerequisites—fire alarms, security systems and carbon monoxide monitoring systems—to further whittle the field. Thanks to what amounted to a bait-and-switch maneuver, the city had to set up a refund-application process to collectives that had won the lottery but were subsequently zoned out of contention.

Ultimately, of the five locations tied to Morris that won the lottery, just two ever opened their doors; of those, only one continues to operate. Morris and his investors had to back out of the business because they ran out of money. "We never made a fucking dollar," he says. "My SJK guys, of the $500,000 they outlaid, I don't think they'll get any of that back."

Morris eventually fired Howard and a woman named Nichole West, who says she drew up a business plan for SJK and never received a dime in return. Both Howard, who now volunteers for Avalon Collective, and West, who has left Long Beach and the medical-marijuana industry, claim Morris owes them thousands of dollars. After Howard complained to one of SJK's investors, a famous soccer player who seemed sympathetic, one of the group's lawyers sent him a letter, which the *Weekly* obtained, threatening to sue him and referring to his unspecified allegations as "untrue" and "grossly slanderous."

But if Morris and other collective operators who managed to win the lottery were upset at the city, so were those whose Ping-Pong balls weren't chosen, or who refused to pay, or could not afford the $15,000 fee to play the game. One of those was people was Larry Parks, who owned the 1 A.M. collective, which he was ordered to shut down after refusing to pay the city's lottery fee. Parks first became suspicious about the city's program weeks earlier, when he paid a $2,000 consulting fee to Morris' attorney, Violas.

"I wanted to get his thoughts about the lottery process and what he thought my chances were," Parks recalls. "He wanted me to hire him for $2,000 a month and told me his clients don't get bothered by the city. He called it 'good lawyering' and said he'd need $5,000 here and $5,000 there to spread around."

Violas claimed to be "good friends" with Erik Sund, Long Beach's business-relations manager and director of the city's medical-marijuana program. "Mr. Violas told me that if I paid him money, he would be able to guarantee acceptance of my patient-cooperative group's application for a Long Beach city permit," Parks later stated in a sworn deposition. "When I asked him how he could do this, he told me . . . my group might have to make monetary contributions to city projects or to city officials."

Parks declined to take Violas on as a lawyer. Sund did not respond to an interview request. In an interview at his office in downtown Long Beach, Violas stated that while he maintains "cordial" relationships with Sund and other city officials, he has never made any such guarantees: "I categorically deny that I've ever promised any client that payment of money to a city official will result in favorable treatment."

Like Parks, Mike Genero refused to pay the fee to enter the lottery; soon after, the city began sending code-enforcement officers to his collective, threatening his landlord, and issuing him up to $50,000 in fines over a period of several months. The police also showed up and filed misdemeanor charges—violating the city's marijuana ordinance—against his security guard and manager. "They used every kind of tactic that you can imagine," Genaro says. "It was just so overwhelming."

Dallas Alexander, who operates the Dank City Collective, also paid only a token fee of $500 to the city, instead of the $15,000. "I was summarily rejected," he says. Not long thereafter, the police raided his shop while he was on his way to work. "They broke down my door with no warrant," he says. "They basically robbed me. They took whatever they could in money. I saw Erik Sund walk out with a bag of my merchandise. They arrested three of my people who were working, but they were out in a couple of hours."

Until she voluntarily closed the dispensary late last year, Katherine Aldrich operated 562 Collective in the north Long Beach neighborhood of Bixby Knolls. She also refused to pay the city's permit fee

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

» FROM PAGE 14

and didn't participate in the lottery. On Feb. 14, 2011, the police raided her collective while she was taking her daughter to the orthodontist. Security footage filmed during the raid shows plainclothes officers accompanied by Sund standing in her lobby.

No arrests were made, but Aldrich received a fine. The cops returned again three months later, again without a warrant. When her employees refused to open the safe, police arrested them but left empty-handed. Sund was present for that raid, too.

"He's a business-license approver," Aldrich complains. "Why he's out there participating in these raids, I have no idea."

City attorney Shannon insisted that the $15,000 in fees demanded by Long Beach is justifiable, given the city's dire economic situation and the cost of regulating the dispensaries that his office envisioned. "We wanted to limit the number of dispensaries, and we wanted to recover our costs," he says. However, Shannon acknowledges, the fee "inadvertently" made it more likely that the "more profit-oriented collectives" would win the lottery. "That was never intended, of course, but that's a fair statement," he says. "It was an unintended consequence."

Matt Pappas, the lawyer who represents Pack and Gayle in their lawsuit against the city, now represents Aldrich, Parks and other collective operators whom the city fined, raided or both for violating its medical-marijuana ordinance.

"I don't know what's happening at the city, but there's something wrong," Pappas says. "When people say they can engineer things and you won't get raided since you're paying money that gets spread about, it's awfully suspect. Think about it: The city is taking money from some collectives and not issuing them citations and going out and raiding the ones that aren't paying the money."

Whatever its basis in reality, the whiff of corruption hasn't gone unnoticed by the federal government. Sources involved in Long Beach's medical-marijuana community told the *Weekly* that FBI agents have interviewed them, although for the most part they refused to provide specifics. "I can't tell you anything about that," said one source.

"They did visit me," said another. "Their questions were about public corruption and not the legality of medical marijuana. The statement I gave was that I wasn't aware of any malfeasance and hadn't engaged in any."

One obvious argument against the concept of deliberate corruption is that collectives that did win the lottery and that haven't been subjected to heavy fines by the city still have no guarantee they won't be shut down. This elite group of collectives, which includes Avalon Wellness Collective, numbers roughly a dozen and has formed a group called Long Beach Collective Association (LBCA). The group's lawyers include both Violas and Rick Brizendine, whose name turned up in a search-warrant affidavit filed by the Orange County Sheriff's Department when it raided Belmont Shore Natural Care collective on Nov. 8, 2011. According to sheriff's officials, the department raided the collective after finding ties between Belmont Shore Natural Care and several Orange County collectives run by a silent investor who, they assert, was using Brizendine to launder his money. Brizendine returned an initial telephone call seeking his comment for this story, but he has subsequently failed to answer his phone. In an interview with the *Long Beach Post*, he denied any wrongdoing.

KATHERINE ALDRICH COLLECTIVE RAIDED BY COPS

Carl Kemp, a registered lobbyist at City Hall, also represents LBCA. He says his clients are frustrated with the fact the city keeps changing its rules. "We have done a lot of work to make the ordinance work well for everyone," Kemp says. "Mr. Shannon has a predisposition against the idea of medical marijuana, and I respect that. But unfortunately, I don't think any moral attitude should force people who have a legitimate need to go back into the dark alley to get their medicine."

Members of LBCA recently held a meeting with the collectives that are suing the city, trying to find a way they can join together in pursuit of a common goal. Valerie Crist, the director of Avalon Wellness Center, is one person who's in favor of such an alliance. A recently divorced Realtor who left the business during the housing bubble and has since invested her life savings in the collective, she says she would have lost everything if it weren't for Cantella, who performed the $500,000 city-required construction at half the cost.

"There are more bad people than good people in this business, and that has got to change," Crist says. "The good people are being run off by the crackdown. My employees don't want to go to jail—ever. We want to follow the rules. There are people who refuse to play this game with the city, and I respect them for it—people who didn't pay the fee and have been raided, hardworking people with the right intentions. Unfortunately, the city has done a good job of dividing us."

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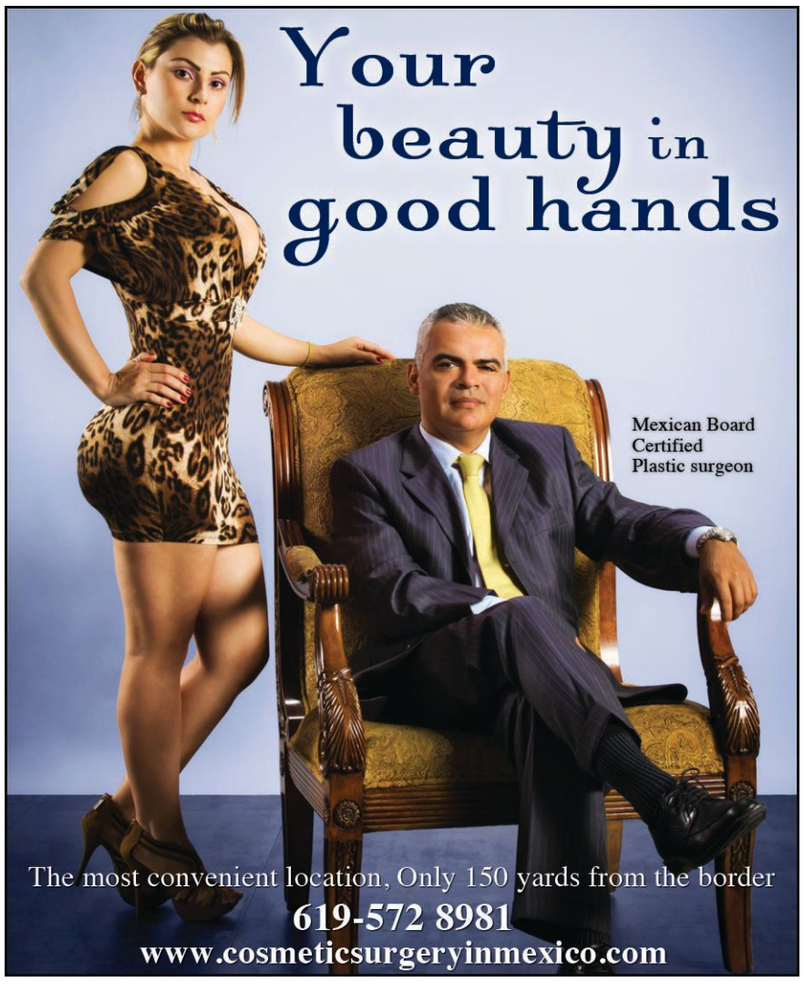

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[COMEDY]

Dirty Jokes

Bob Saget

Currently on a cross-country comedy tour, America's favorite foul-mouthed, '80s-sitcom dad comes back to Orange County to remind everyone that he's still as off-color and vulgar as ever. Completely filthy, even. And we love it. His 2008 Comedy Central Roast is still our favorite of the bunch; he had the best one-liner in *Half-Baked*, as well as an awesome couple of turns on *Entourage*—Bob Saget is the stuff of comedy legend. Catch him this weekend as he regales audiences with tales of sex, drugs and *America's Funniest Home Videos*—but be warned: This is definitely good, dirty, fucked-up fun.

Bob Saget at the Brea Improv, 120 S. Brea Blvd., Brea, (714) 482-0700; improv.com. 8 & 10 p.m.; also Sat., 7 & 9 p.m. $25. 21+. —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

Femme Fatale

EMILIE AUTUMN

It's Gothic/industrial/dollhouse chic. Or call it "victoriandustrial," a term musician Emilie Autumn coined to describe herself. A classically trained violinist, Autumn is a fascinating free spirit. The LA native left regular school as a child to pursue her musical talent and later dropped out of college because people there disagreed with her physical appearance—corsets and pink hair and a lot of Gothic gorgeousness. Her live shows are as much performance art as concert—don't miss her this week at the Glass House and get ready for spectacles such as burlesque beauties playing with pyrotechnics.

Emilie Autumn at the Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona; www.theglasshouse.us. 7 p.m. $15. All ages. —ERIN DEWITT

CARRIE ANN BAADE, *EXPLAINING DEATH TO A RABBIT (INLE OF WATERSHIP DOWN)*

sat/02/04

[ART]

Sink Your Teeth In

'Gothic' Opening Reception

What exactly is Gothic? Is it metal lunch pails, too much eyeliner and romantic fantasies involving vampires? Not really. The Orange County Center for Contemporary Art looks beyond the clichés at this counterculture rich in literary and visual flourishes. Curated by Amy V. Grimm, assistant professor of art history for Irvine Valley College, the exhibit takes a gander at "the human desire to experience pleasurable fear." Selected works include *Explaining Death to a Rabbit*, which was inspired by the 1972 fantasy novel *Watership Down* and features a Victorian woman covered in a pile of clearly uncomfortable bunnies. Looks disturbing to us. If this show doesn't succeed in its mission, stick around for the Soho Taco Truck—disturbingly delicious.

"Gothic" Opening Reception at Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, 117 N. Sycamore, Santa Ana, (714) 667-1517; www.occca.org. 6 p.m. Through March 24. Free. —BRANDON FERGUSON

[CONCERT]

Ladies' Night

Lisa Loeb and Jill Sobule

So let's remember when: Lisa Loeb got her big chance with her song "Stay" in the end credits of *Reality Bites*. And when Jill Sobule's song "Supermodel" was featured in *Clueless*, she got a nice push to the head of a pack including the likes of Alanis Morissette and Liz Phair. That was a focused little pop moment, and even now, you'll hear both of their hits on the kind of radio stations that have defined the tunes of the '90s as classic. But both Loeb and Sobule had more interesting days ahead of them, routed through reality TV (Loeb) and song-title coincidence (Sobule's "I Kissed a Girl") and even children's music and custom eyewear (Loeb again, of course). With goofball alt-hype now mercifully dissipated, Sobule's Zevon-meets-Wainwright story-songs and Loeb's winsome latter-day power-pop songs get welcome breathing room.

Lisa Loeb and Jill Sobule with Tara Porter at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930; www.thecoachhouse.com. 8 p.m. $25. All ages. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

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sun/02/05

[LECTURE]

Snap Shot

'The History of Cuban Photography: A Personal Perspective'

The history of Cuban photography begins on April 5, 1840, when the first Cuban daguerreotype—arranged by Pedro Téllez de Girón, and depicting Havana's Plaza de Armas—is printed in *The Havana Star*. A generation later, homegrown studios were booming, firmly establishing a photographic transition that would persist through the wars of 1868 and 1895, the revolution of 1959, and more. The Museum of Latin American Art's president and CEO, Stuart Ashman, is not only a photographer himself, but he also grew up in Cuba, and here, he presents a lecture examining the relationship between art and history through a century and a half of Cuban photography, with particular focus on photojournalists such as the pre-revolutionary Generoso Funcasta and Castro-era documentarian Raúl Corrales.

"The History of Cuban Photography: A Personal Perspective" at the Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, (562) 437-4689; www.molaa.org. 2 p.m. $10; members and students, free. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[THEATER]

Common Cents

AMERICAN BUFFALO

There's no telling what a person will do in times of desperation—add three morally corrupt, down-on-their-luck crooks to that equation, and prepare for disaster. In David Mamet's Obie-winning, New York Drama Critics Circle Award-winning play *American Buffalo*, a trio of no-goods conspires to steal a man's coin collection after he buys a rare nickel from them—fair and square—for much less than it's worth. Suck it up and move on? Not these guys. Watch this local performance, directed by Katie Chidester, and delight as the plan crumbles, loyalties dissipate, violence ensues, and the team of seedy characters gets a swift kick in the ass from good ol' karma.

American Buffalo at STAGEStheatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484; www.stagesoc.org. 2 p.m. Through Feb. 19. $18-$20. —ERIN DEWITT

mon/02/06

[CONCERT]

Going Solo

Nomi

This month's Detroit residency is filled by pianist and songwriter Nomi Abadi, known for her work with Santa Monica band Wonderthings. With that group, her voice soars like Evanescence's Amy Lee and she pounds the keys with the frenetic dexterity of Fiona Apple. Be sure to check out YouTube videos of Nomi when she was just 5 years old, fronting the Orange County Chamber Orchestra. With her post-adolescent sultriness, she's sure to please the Detroit crowd with her solo act.

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Nomi with A Series of Plains, Stanley Lucas Revolution and Something for Now at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; www.detroitbar.com. 9 p.m. Free. 21+. —BRANDON FERGUSON

tue/02/07

[CONCERT]

Special Appearances

Where's the Band?

Fans have practically begged Dustin Kensrue of Thrice for a follow-up to his 2007 debut solo album, *Please Come Home*. It's seriously *that* good. His solo work is the antithesis of the post-hardcore band who brought him fame—acoustic-based, bare, folk tales. The songs are heartfelt and heartbreaking, making them incredibly relatable. Perhaps now that Thrice have announced an indefinite hiatus, Kensrue can record that second album we've all been (mostly) patiently waiting for.

Where's the Band? with Dustin Kensrue, Chris Conley of Saves the Day, Matt Pryor of the Get Up Kids and more at the Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, (888) 862-9573; www.yosttheater.com. 6:30 p.m. $14-$16. All ages. —TAYLOR HAMBY

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wed/02/08

[CONCERT]

Honky Tonk Women

Lorrie Morgan

Polished country-pop may have flooded the U.S. airwaves throughout most of the '80s, but the end of the decade saw a brief resurgence of traditional western swing, honky-tonk and bluegrass styles that had been staples of the genre 20 years before. Country music wasn't just changing its melodies, however; it was also shedding its hang-ups about female artists. No longer was it a radio-station rule that female singers couldn't be played back to back, and thus, a whole new gaggle of country cowgirls including Lorrie Morgan strapped on guitars and stormed the barn with platinum albums and No. 1 hits. Twenty years later, the gal still has what it takes—check her out and relive the days when "What Part of No Don't You Understand?" on the juke meant you could ditch a letch in style.

Lorrie Morgan with Pam Tillis at Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Dr., Cerritos, (562) 916-8500; www.cerritoscenter.com. 8 p.m. $45-$70. —STACY DAVIES

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[EXHIBIT]

On the Record

'The Word: Ink and Blood'

There is perhaps no work of literature more influential on human existence than the Bible. And despite having been authored thousands of years ago, it is still relevant and, remarkably, still available in its original form. View portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls along with leaves from the original Gutenberg Bible and rare English-printed Bibles, pictographic tablets from ancient Mesopotamia, and hundreds of other important historical textual artifacts during Muzeo's new exhibit, "The Word: Ink and Blood," showing through September. Discovering the origins of the written word will surely leave a mark on your soul.

"The Word: Ink and Blood" at Muzeo, 241 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 956-8936; www.muzeo.org. 10 a.m. Through Sept. 9. $9-$13. —AMANDA PARSONS

thu/02/09

[CONCERT]

A String Thing

Laguna Beach Music Festival: *The Genius of Edgar Meyer*

Just as its done the past 10 years, the Laguna Beach Music Festival takes over the beachside city for a week to showcase both established and upcoming musicians. These talented, young performers study under famous mentors in their field, and the public gets to view the evolving results. Returning as a teacher this year is Edgar Meyer, master composer/performer on the double bass. In honor of his multiple recording achievements, Sony/BMG created a compilation of his work titled *The Best of Edgar Meyer* in 2007. Spend an evening of the festival soaking up Meyer's sonorous sounds as he performs at the Laguna Playhouse.

Laguna Beach Music Festival presents *The Genius of Edgar Meyer* at Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-2787; www.lagunabeachmusicfestival.com. 8 p.m. $35-$40. —JESSICA FORD

[THEATER]

Note By Note

ROOMS: A ROCK ROMANCE

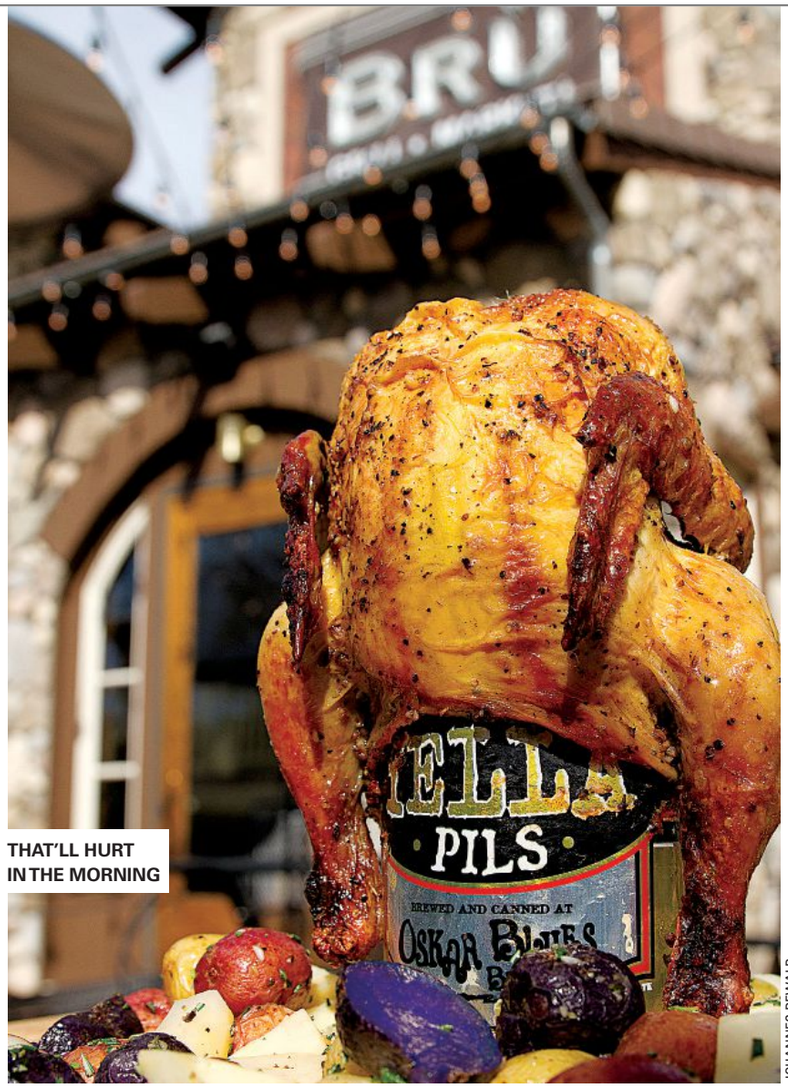
While most rock musicals tend to blow (see: the upcoming atrocious film adaptation starring Tom Cruise), this is a musical about rock. Totally different. Ambitious singer/songwriter Monica falls for drunken, agoraphobic musician Ian in late '70s Glasgow. Together, they take on the world and test the breaking point of their relationship. Will love conquer fame? Yes, we all know that story, but what this off-Broadway hit promises audiences is pure musical cheer—catchy songs and actors who can really belt it out. It's the storybook tale of two young people finding romance through a common love of music—but how romantic is it when the water gets shut off because neither of them has a real job? Okay, that's not in the play. But it should be.

Rooms: A Rock Romance at the Chance Theater, 5552 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim Hills, (714) 777-3033; www.chancetheater.com. 8 p.m. Through March 4. $35-$40. —ERIN DEWITT

Drunken Masters

Brü Grill & Market gives Lake Forest beer-can chicken and other delicious, alcohol-laced oddities

BY EDWIN GOEI



THAT'LL HURT IN THE MORNING

JOHANNES DEWALD

I'm willing to bet that most people have never met beer-can chicken in the flesh. You may have seen the dish on a recent episode of *Top Chef: Texas*; you may have had every intention of someday shoving a can up a bird's *tochis* while it roasts. But sightings of it in settings other than a backyard barbecue will be so rare the dish might as well be mythical. "Beer Can Chicken" is listed on the menu at Roy Choi's A-Frame in LA—but you'll discover the beer is merely a marinade for a bird that's ultimately fried. It's a cop-out to not use the can. Why call it beer-can chicken if you're not going to take it literally?

Joseph Gotti, executive chef at Brü Grill & Market in Lake Forest, takes it literally. And when you finally see it, you can't help but chuckle. The golden-roasted Cornish game hen on your plate has been violated in the worst way, with a can almost half its size, the sight looking as though it's a proctology worst-case scenario. It's a gimmick for sure—the thing still tastes like roast chicken—but it sets the tone for the new restaurant, which has to have some of the oddest and most alcohol-involved food of any gastropub in OC.

The fact that alcohol finds its way into more than the usual share of dishes makes you wonder whether the chefs are way too cozy with the bartenders. There are oysters on the half shell laced with vodka, an add-on as unexpected as the cocktail-sauce balloons formed by molecular-gastronomic action; the blood-red globules resemble overgrown tumors on top of the oysters. If you forget for a moment that neither component was necessary—that the cocktail sauce could've done just as well on the side and in its original form—you appreciate that they dared themselves to do it. If anything, it keeps the kookiness introduced by the beer-can chicken in play.

By now, you shouldn't be surprised they use beer as the steaming medium for a Dungeness crab, half-submerged in the butter-and-cream-enriched broth, with roasted heads of garlic slowly turning to mush. Though too bitter to sip, the liquid seeps into every recess and crevasse of the meat, undercutting the sweetness the same time it greases up your hands as though it's oily lotion. If the crispy-on-the-outside, warm-and-dense-on-the-inside, excellent pretzel-bread appetizer didn't already come with a house-made cheese fondue and a ground-mustard sauce for dipping, the crab broth would've been the thing to dunk it into.

The burger, of course, has "drunken caramelized onions," and the sausage in the house hoagie is IPA-infused. Even the tri-colored beet salad isn't immune to a dose of booze in the form of "drunken goat cheese" shaved into thin sheets that adorn a mound of micro greens. It's a refreshing salad: crisp, sweet, salty—and strikingly pretty, thanks in part to the reduced-to-syrup balsamic smeared in artsy skid marks on the plate.

Though you gravitate to these items, in truth, a majority of the food you'll eventually eat here doesn't lean on alcohol as flavoring. The "braised for 24 hours" short rib could've actually used the assist of more red wine. It fell apart dutifully into shreds, but the beef lamentably suffered from blandness. As a result, the savory bread-pudding side dish became the most interesting thing on the plate. And there's really no better word than "interesting" to describe this puzzlingly weird, wobbly as Jell-O, soft as oatmeal, squat cylinder of almost-custard with bits of ham embedded in it.

A few fish dishes are more conventional. Pan-seared albacore sits atop a mustard-inflected mound of potato purée with wilted spinach and drizzled with a Thai-chili sauce that, for once, doesn't taste like it came from a bottle. A wild-salmon steak spackled with a Meyer lemon vinaigrette was pan-fried to a delectable crispiness despite missing its advertised "forbidden rice" side dish. The ordinary-looking white rice that came in its stead was cooked properly, a little al dente.

It must be noted that the bar mixes up particularly strong libations. And as expected of a restaurant that calls itself Brü, there is a stash of wines on sale in a room dedicated to the bottles, as well as a carefully curated list of beers whose only fault is that some varieties run out too quickly. It is for these reasons, not just for inherent humor of the beer-can chicken or its tendency to booze up some of its dishes, that you should come to Brü Grill & Market. It's one of the few dining options on El Toro Road that isn't a chain. And the fact it answers to no corporate overlords allows it the liberty of doing such things as . . . well, sodomizing a chicken with a can of beer.

BRÜ GRILL & MARKET
23730 El Toro Rd., Lake Forest, (949) 305-5757; www.brugrill.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.- midnight. Dinner for two, $30-$60, food only. Full bar.

HOLE IN THE WALL
» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Chow Bella

CIAO! DELI & PIZZERIA
891 W. Baker St., Ste. A-18, Costa Mesa, (714) 979-8669; www.ciaodelipizza.com.

"I've turned into a food snob," managing editor Nick Schou told me as he watched me scarf down a bowl of caesar salad at Ciao! Deli & Pizzeria in Costa Mesa. It was a small bowl, part of the lunch special, featuring Parmesan cheese, croutons and romaine lettuce pulled from a bag, topped by dressing from a bottle. "The only proper Parmesan should come from Parma, and it shouldn't be in a bag; it should be shaved off . . ." And then Nick pretended to hold a grater and a block of cheese and "shaved" up a hypothetical mound of the stuff.

I agreed—and I didn't give a damn. We should always care about the quality of food, but when a plate of spaghetti, marinara sauce singing like a thousand Tuscan sunsets, sits before you, purity goes out the door just as it does at a sorority initiation ritual. This is especially the case when it comes to Italian-American food, along with Chinese and Mexican one of the great mutt cuisines of the United States, a food built on modifying the mother country to this brave new land to reach not heights, but comfort. That's why pastas are almost always interchangeable at such restaurants, and Ciao initially seems to embody that. It concentrates only on the classics of the genres—pastas and subs built on heft, pizzas that don't hew to any regional tradition other than the universal love for a slice. But amazingly—surprisingly—the Ciao folks take the commonplace and push it toward the divine. That pizza: thick, with great-wonderful cheese that melts to a creaminess almost unknown to local Italian-American pizzerias. Most pizzas need toppings to mask the limp cheese, the rancid marinara, the forgettable crust, but Ciao's excels—I ordered a slice of cheese pizza and, for the first time I can remember, didn't put any red flakes or Parmesan cheese on it. Pastas are perfectly al dente; the subs, filling and nuanced. And the garlic knots, hunks of bread dusted with garlic, are wonderful. Authentic? Not in the least—and no one cares, busy as they are chowing down.

As if to prove this point, blaring on Ciao's speakers while Nick and I ate was Dino crooning "Sway" (a song originally recorded as a Mexican bolero) followed by Rosemary Clooney's sultry "Mambo Italiano." All around the tiny place were posters featuring Jimi Hendrix, *The Godfather*, Joe DiMaggio, the Raiders—a big, beautiful, Italian-American mess, one that even Nick couldn't disagree with when we left, to-go boxes in tow. "That was a good pizza," he admitted, somewhat sheepishly. "Just the right amount of grease."

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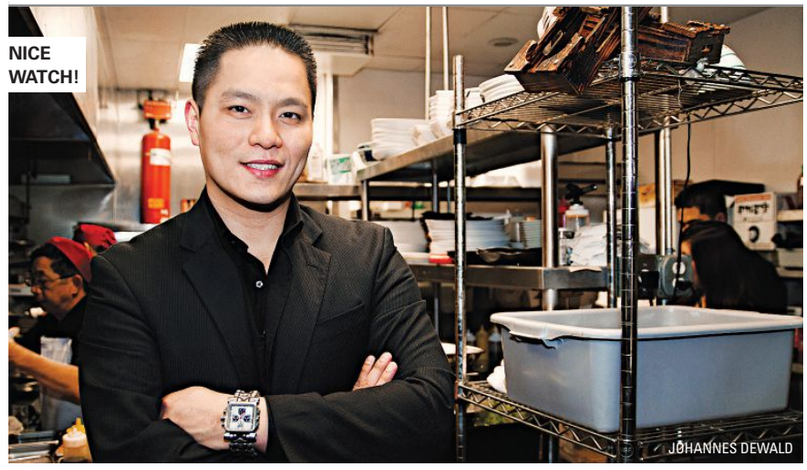

Time for Taiwanese

Paul Zhu of the Balcony Grill & Bar

Being the owner of a dining establishment means worrying not only about the food, but also about every other aspect associated with running a business. Marketing campaigns, scheduling of employees and purchasing supplies are just a fraction of the responsibilities Paul Zhu has on his mind at the Balcony Grill & Bar.

What are five words that describe your food?
Taiwanese cuisine with a twist!
What are four words that describe you?
Passionate for delicious foods!
Your best recent food find:
A friend introduced me to El Gallo Giro in Santa Ana. It's open 24 hours, and by far, it's one of the tastiest Mexican cuisines around. There's an off-menu torta that I like to order that has three types of meat.
Rules of conduct in your kitchen:
Teamwork! Pitch in and have more fun!
One food you detest:
I absolutely love the stench of our stinky tofu, but I cannot tolerate the smell and taste of durian!
One food you can't live without:
No Chinese meal is complete without rice!
Culinarily speaking, Orange County has the best:
Pho. In Westminster, I go to Pho 79.
What fast food do you admit to eating?
A nice, juicy Double-Double, animal-style, from In-N-Out is to indulge the taste buds. Animal-style fries are good, too.
Best culinary tip for the home cook:
Don't cheat on taste by adding too much MSG!
After-work hangout:
I go to the 24-hour BCD Tofu House in Diamond Jamboree plaza for that after-2 a.m. Fix.
What you'd like to see more of in Orange County from a culinary standpoint:
More restaurant weeks themed at highlighting a different international cuisine each week. This would help introduce customers to cultural foods from around the world.
What you'd like to see less of in Orange County from a culinary standpoint:
It appears lately that when a new concept restaurant does exceptionally well, a whole slew of imitation restaurants springs up nearby to copy the concept, therefore oversaturating the market.
Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:
Snake meat in Shanghai. All the cartilage made it very chewy.
Weirdest customer request:
A customer ordered our pineapple fried rice without the pineapples. Of course, we always cater to our customers' needs.
Who's your hero, culinary or otherwise?
My father had sacrificed so much by coming to the United States. He worked relentlessly to establish a successful career and to provide our family with a beautiful home and future.
How long does it take you to find parking at Diamond Jamboree?
I usually find parking within five minutes because not many people are aware of the four-story parking structure in the back of the plaza. It has a bridge that leads directly to the Balcony.
Last book read and/or movie watched.
I just watched *War Horse* at Edwards 21 at the Irvine Spectrum.
Favorite places to eat (besides your own):
Such a hard question to answer because I love just about every food there is. It's all up to the cravings at the time, but lately I've been going to Gen Korean BBQ off Newport in Tustin.
Why use milk in your shaved snow?
It gives it a richer taste compared to standard shaved ice. By combining that with our other secret ingredients, we are able to create the perfect, fluffy, shaved-snow texture.
Which dish would you tell newcomers to the Balcony Grill & Bar to try first?
By far, our most popular item is the individually packaged shabu/hot pot set that allows customers to choose from a variety of soup flavors and meat selections.

ON THE LINE
» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

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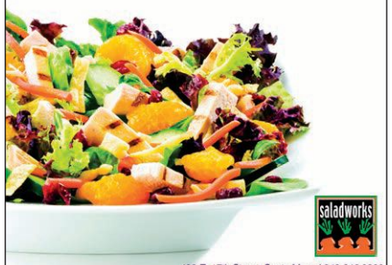

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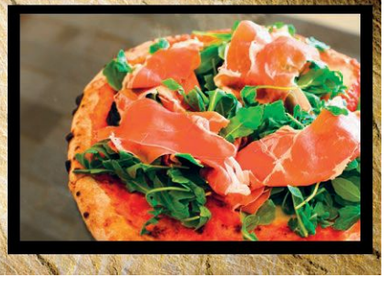

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Drink of the Week

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

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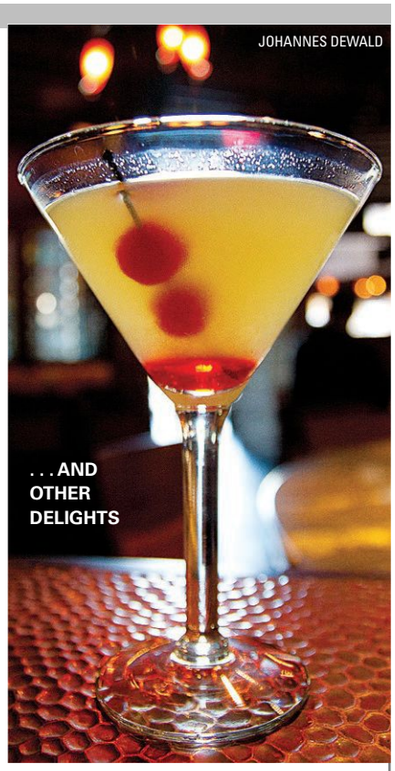
JOHANNES DEWALD
. . . AND OTHER DELIGHTS

Truth be told, when friends want to meet for drinks, our Switzerland is BJ's. Yet we found ourselves at the District one happy hour, and negotiations concluded at this other mainstream brewhouse. After scanning JT's booze options, the most intriguing choice also doubled as my "least likely to request."

The Whipped Cherry Pie martini conjured up twisted mash-ups involving *Twin Peaks* and '80s hair bands that weren't Bon Jovi. Oh, and models writhing on car hoods with come-hither looks. And I wanted to order that *because* . . . ?

Well, it sounded better than the standard list of Cosmos and fruity concoctions. Combining dual vodkas, sweet and sour, and pineapple juice, we braced ourselves for a gag reflex. It just never happened. In fact, we threw it back quicker than most cocktails.

THE DRINK

It's as rich as any dessert, yet balanced enough to avoid an overdose of sweetness. Pineapple juice, which is acidic by itself, takes on another personality when blended with both cherry and whipped-cream vodka. No chocolate swirls or sugar rims necessary; this was plenty.

We still think there's some dirty inside joke the bartenders snicker over when it's ordered, but we'll ask for a second round anyway. *From a Jan. 27 Stick a Fork In It post.*

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» DAVE LIEBERMAN

Harbor Boulevard in Anaheim and Garden Grove is well-known as a black hole of good food, being lined with every chain America could come up with. Eventually, though, the beige sameness peters out, and by the time you cross Lampson Avenue, you're back in the dusty, grimy Garden Grove we all know and love. Not 500 feet south of the last high-rise resort hotel sits a U-shaped mini-mall with some of the best cuisine available to visiting tourists—including a branch of the OC mini-chain El Moctezuma, a Oaxacan hole-in-the-wall *par excellence* that serves the best "Mexican pizza" in existence. (Suck it, Taco Bell.)

Called a tlayuda (or a clayuda), it's an enormous, crispy tortilla the size of a truck hubcap, spread with black beans and asiento (unrefined pork fat), then topped with milky, stringy queso Oaxaca, crumbly queso fresco, cabbage, tomato and avocado. For a little extra money, get meat on top—smoky, spicy cecina enchilada is the best option. Cut the richness of the dish with ensalada de nopales: chopped, cooked prickly pear cactus paddles tossed with chiles, onions, tomatoes, cilantro and lime juice. *From a Jan. 25 Stick a Fork In It post.*

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BAD IDEA, EXCEPT FOR THE BEER

Horror, Stripped Down to Its Bones

No room for indulgence at the Ti West Inn

BY NICK PINKERTON

Ti West, the 34-year-old writer/director of *The Innkeepers*, has spent the past several years steadily toiling his way through the ranks of horror filmmaking. His little-seen apprenticeship cheapies (*The Roost*, *Trigger Man*) led to a disowned, freelance, gross-out job (*Cabin Fever 2: Spring Fever*), and then a name-above-the-title breakthrough with 2009's *The House of the Devil*, which showed a quantum leap in West's control over his material and proved the thesis that, to mangle a Godard-ism, all you need to make a scary movie is a girl and an old building.

The Innkeepers, another marked refinement of technique that runs with the same idea, takes place almost entirely on the premises of the Yankee Pedlar, a three-story, turn-of-the-20th-century hotel located on what might be the Main Street of any smallish, down-on-its-heels Northeastern city. It's the Pedlar's last weekend of operation, and the skeleton crew of Claire (Sara Paxton) and Luke (Pat Healy) is sleeping over, trading off shifts at the front desk. Since the hotel is nearly empty, however, Claire and Luke devote most of their attention not to the guests, but to investigating supernatural goings-on in the hotel. With a mic cued to EVP frequencies, the pair tries to collect solid evidence of haunting-via-suicide-case Madeline O'Malley, whose ghost Luke claims he has seen wandering the halls.

West's *Devil*, which followed its female protagonist, Samantha, through an evening of housesitting, created rising tension out of banal incidents (discordant family photos, unopened doors, a pizza delivery) that weren't particularly menacing by themselves but, imbued with sinister, uncanny implications, made for a suffocating slow-burn. This was fueled largely by a viewer's teasing knowledge of horrors just outside Samantha's view, a privileged vantage that *Innkeepers* does away with, as though West is seeing how many support pegs he can knock away while still holding a viewer's attention. In a genre lately given to gluttonous effects, West is the rare minimalist. Here, our almost complete POV identification with Claire is established early; when she puts on headphones, the soundtrack becomes muffled. (One of the few exceptions is made in order to not show something horrible.) *Innkeepers* stretches *Devil*'s withholding further, creating a blank canvas of non-events against which the slightest incident, such as a piano key that pounds down by itself, takes on an undue significance and becomes something monumental.

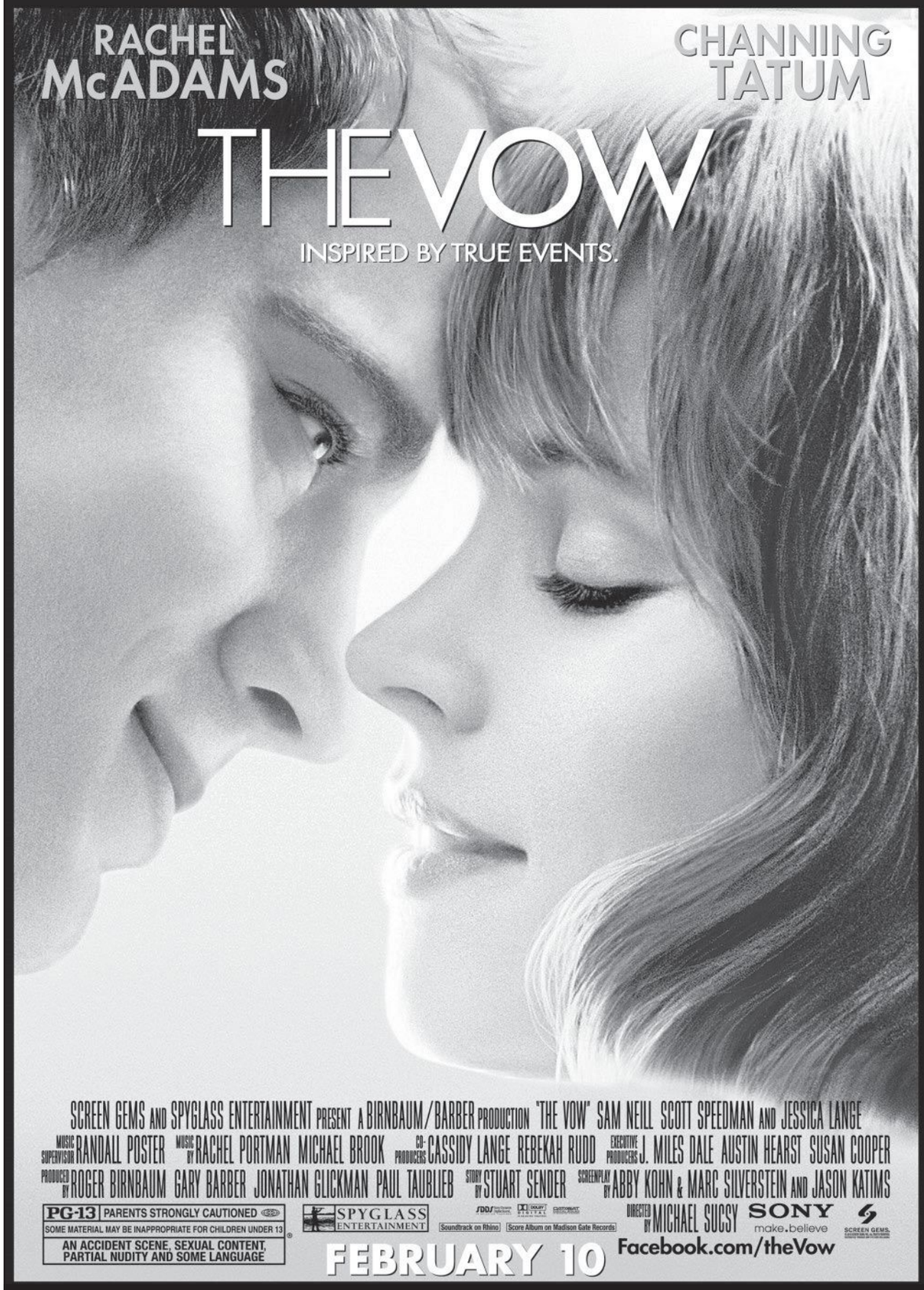
Of course, something does eventually happen, but the throttling shift of *The Innkeepers*' last act would be too little, too late if West hadn't already found traction in his movie's routine world. Paxton, the fine-featured, dimple-chinned blonde who managed to shine through the murk of the remade *Last House On the Left* and *Shark Night 3D*, gives a performance that's spunky and charming without being cloying. (Although her tomboyish adorability challenges the premise of Claire being abandoned at work for the weekend—you can't imagine this single girl behind a desk for any amount of time without collecting a dozen guys who'd find any excuse to hang around.) The dynamic between Claire and Luke is clearly written without overpunctuation: She's straight out of high school, teenaged sulkiness moving directly into an adult's no-prospects despair. Luke is maybe 10 years older and 10 years sadder, camouflaging a hopeless crush on Claire with affected older-brotherly forbearance, while she blithely overlooks it with innocently cruel obliviousness. (Luke's prospects are made clear in a single reaction shot in which Claire wrinkles her nose upon catching a glimpse of his sagging tighty-whities.)

> "In a genre lately given to gluttonous effects, Ti West is the rare minimalist."

The Innkeepers also has a good eye for the details of crummy shift work, including a bit of nicely played physical comedy involving humping trash into a Dumpster, which will be horribly familiar to service-industry vets. In another scene, Claire and Luke, beer-buzzed and bored, act out a burlesque of the hotel's ghosts, to exorcise the tension. This bit of nose-thumbing into the dark recalls a similar defiant release in *Devil*, in which star Jocelin Donahue Jazzercised her way through foreboding corridors in a safe bubble of Walkman noise. It's this youthful denial of vulnerability that makes West's slow-sidling haunted-house movies work. He understands the kidding way that his audience approaches horror and seems to play along with that jokey imperviousness—until rudely tearing up the all-in-good-fun contract, gouging us with actual pain. *The Innkeepers* is so loaded with false scares and cautious treading toward nothing that when freshly spilled blood suddenly flashes onscreen, the shock is really alarming, a return to the scrambling, clambering fear of death that is at the center of these silly horror movies.

THE INNKEEPERS **was written and directed by Ti West; and stars Sara Paxton, Pat Healy and Kelly McGillis. Rated R.**

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY WEEKEND, MAKE A DATE.



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opening

BIG MIRACLE Starring everyone who wasn't in *New Year's Eve*—and larded with just as many bromides—*Big Miracle* is inspired by the true story of the end-of-the-Cold War effort to free three gray whales trapped by ice in northern Alaska. In October 1988, Adam (John Krasinski), a TV reporter from Anchorage doing some stories in tiny Barrow, discovers a trio of whales blocked by five miles of ice from swimming south to Mexico. Adam's segment on the creatures' plight is picked up by *NBC Nightly News* ("Brokaw loves these stories"). As the other major networks follow suit, rescuing the whales becomes an excellent PR opportunity for Greenpeace activist Rachel (Drew Barrymore), big-oil executive J.W. McGraw (Ted Danson), an Alaska National Guard colonel (Dermot Mulroney), a staffer for Ronald Reagan (Vinessa Shaw)—and for the glasnost-era Soviet Union. Directed by Ken Kwapis (*He's Just Not That Into You*), *Big Miracle* leans heavily on anthropomorphizing the underwater giants. "Everybody loves whales," Adam says. If so, that affection mutates into narcissistic personality disorder as Rachel, Adam's ex, cries to him: "Even though they're big and powerful, they're *so much like us*. We're vulnerable, and we get scared, and *we need help sometimes, too*." Barrymore is frequently called upon to deliver sanctimonious rants followed by tears, and Krasinski to soothe her by reminding her of her limits. While rooting for the marine mammals, your heart will also go out to the cast, stuck even more pitiably in syrupy manufactured crises. **(PG)** Melissa Anderson. *Countywide*.

CHRONICLE Written by Max "Son of John" Landis, *Chronicle* playfully transcends its "*Cloverfield* meets *Heroes*" pitch. Brimming with passive anger over his mother's terminal illness and his father's drunken abuse, Seattle loner Andrew (Dane DeHaan) buys a cheap camcorder and records every banal whim with his cousin Matt (Alex Russell). Andrew brings his new tool of expression everywhere, including a barn rave that introduces perky blond video blogger Monica (Anna Wood) and her—or rather, the film's—second camera. Out in a valley behind the barn, Matt and unlikely new pal Steve (Michael B. Jordan), a handsome stud who's a shoo-in for class president, discover a peculiar hole in the ground and want to film it. "Have you ever heard of Plato's Allegory of the Cave?" Matt asks as the trio goes spelunking moments before the force of a pulsating, gleaming space crystal infects them with the ability of telekinesis. Unlike typical superhero-origin tales, there's a shrewd naturalism to this outlandish fantasy that befits these emotionally underdeveloped, horny, and otherwise average high schoolers. There's no great call to adventure or heroism for boys who are more interested in filming extreme *Jackass*-style stunts and messing with chicks. It's only when Andrew's hostility bubbles over with superhuman hubris that the bromance explodes in sinister, surprising, seamlessly CGI-enhanced ways. *Chronicle*'s premise also provides a clever conceit to avoid ugly, handheld images: Andrew, perhaps ready for a Hollywood career, floats the camera around by the power of his imagination. **(PG-13)** Aaron Hillis. *Countywide*.

THE INNKEEPERS See "Horror, Stripped Down to Its Bones," page 29.

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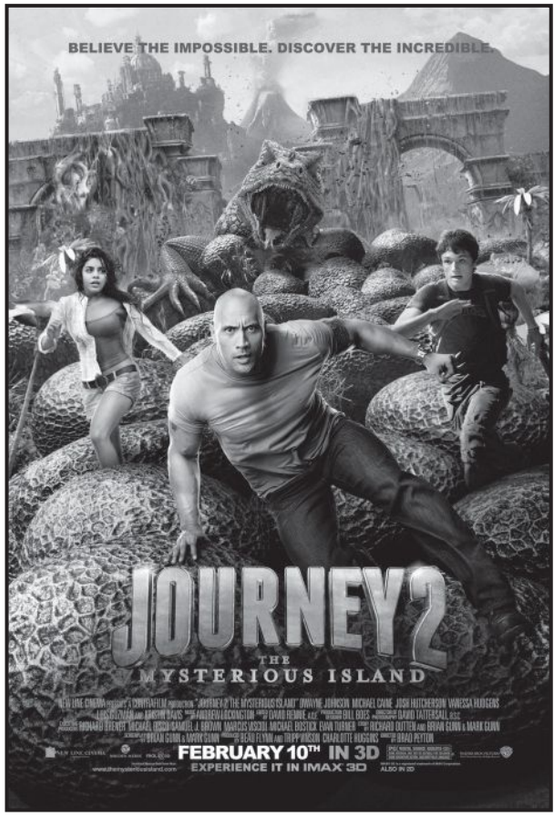

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Citizen Screwed-Up

Orson's Shadow fictionalizes a topsy-turvy Orson Welles and Laurence Olivier collaboration

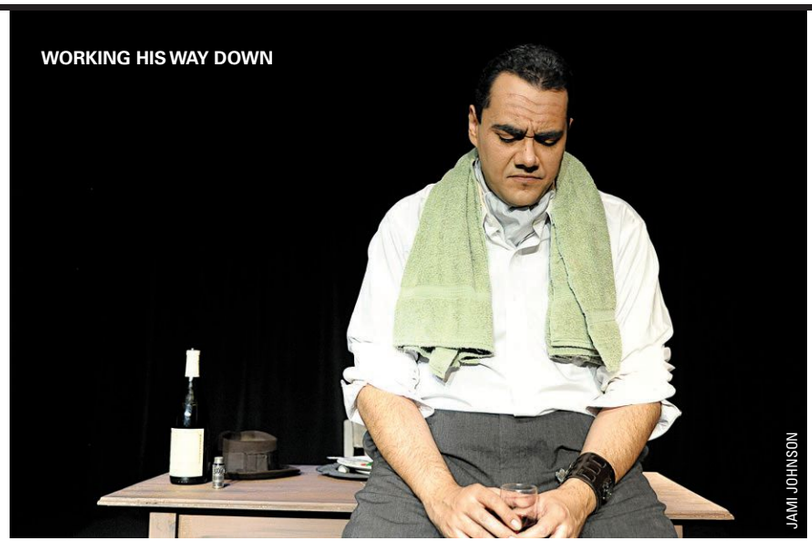
BY JOEL BEERS

All warm and fuzzy Theodore Cleaver and Ozzie and Harriet nostalgia aside, the 1950s was arguably the most exciting decade in the history of theater. In Europe, the absurdist works of Beckett, Genet and Ionesco demolished the concept of the well-made play. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, American giants such as Elia Kazan, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams were at their peak; and schools of acting based on in-the-moment-emotion, such as the so-called Method, rather than ossified technique, had already launched the careers of protean actors Marlon Brando and James Dean and would soon graduate Robert DeNiro, Dustin Hoffman and Al Pacino.

But there were still a couple of dinosaurs prowling the stages of America and Europe: Laurence Olivier and Orson Welles. And an actual 1960 theatrical collaboration between those two is at the heart of Austin Pendleton's fascinating, if flawed, 2000 play, *Orson's Shadow*.

Olivier, 53 at the time, was a colossus. Already knighted, he'd conquered both film and stage and was considering forming a national theater in England. Welles, only 45, was a very tired 45. Twenty years past his masterpiece, *Citizen Kane,* the enfant terrible had turned into a Hollywood pariah. Though considered a genius, he couldn't get his own films made; in desperation, he returned to the medium where he began—the theater—and wrote his Falstaff-as-tragic-hero vehicle *Chimes At Midnight* in hopes of finding financing to turn it into a film. But the play proved a disaster, playing to mostly empty houses in Dublin.

That's where *Orson's Shadow* begins. The third of the four legendary personalities on hand, the illustrious theater critic and Welles pal Kenneth Tynan, solicits him to direct Ionesco's play about the dangers of fascism, *Rhinoceros*, and tells Welles he can get Olivier to star in it. Welles and Olivier, though respecting each other's talent, have their own tangled history, mostly involving yet another legend in this play: Vivian Leigh, Olivier's manic-depressive wife. All the participants have an angle: Welles hopes that a successful collaboration with Olivier will result in Sir Laurence's proposed theater mounting *Chimes at Midnight*; Tynan wants to work with Olivier in hopes of landing a gig with the aforementioned theater; Olivier's motivation is a little murkier, a blend of wanting to reinvent himself as an actor and the opportunity to work with his mistress, Joan Plowright.



WORKING HIS WAY DOWN

JAMI JOHNSON

Orson's Shadow is catnip to anyone with an interest in mid-20th-century film or theater. Big names are dropped as though they are tabs of acid at a Grateful Dead show; juicy morsels of insider Hollywood gossip abound. And the exploration of the difference between the mediums of the screen and the stage is fascinating. But as a story, it lacks focus. Tynan, the play's instigator and our entry point (he directly addresses the audience throughout), is all but forgotten in the second half, when the clash of personalities between Olivier and Welles takes precedence. And the arrival of Leigh at a rehearsal, which leads to the play's climax, once again shifts the focus. Even though the play never really seems to figure out what it's truly about, the crackling dialogue and the intensely flawed characters at its epicenter (look up Leigh, Olivier, Tynan and Welles on Wikipedia—great reading) make it a compelling journey.

That ride is helped considerably in this Ricci Dedola-directed staging by stellar acting. Tim Thorn's Olivier seems a bit foppish, but he achingly portrays his character's deep insecurities and the agony of wanting to leave a woman he loves but who is bat-shit crazy. Jonathan Lewis' Tynan, though a bit timid for such an illustrious character, is thoroughly believable. Only Cassie Vail Yeager's overwrought portrayal of Leigh doesn't set right; then again, she's playing Scarlett O'Hara saddled by manic depression, so good luck with that. But it's Robert Edward's Orson who's the most riveting. No, he's not morbidly obese and doesn't facially resemble Welles, but his booming bass voice and total mastery of his character's bellowing ego and razor-sharp wit are a joy to watch. He's self-deprecating, tortured, hilarious and a primordial vision of artistic brilliance—often in the same moment.

The combination of words and acting make it impossible to not feel deep sympathy for these characters, and that's not an easy thing to do, considering they are all artistic giants of the 20th century, with awards, accolades and legacies. I mean, fuck, we're talking about *Citizen Kane*, *Gone With the Wind* and Sir Laurence Olivier, for crissakes! But what *Orson's Shadow* incisively shows is that beneath the celebrity, legend and enormous talents, the hearts of very real people beat. And, at play's end, when Plowright, the only one to live past 1989, recounts the sad fates of her colleagues, it's less a moment to shed tears for these larger-than-life icons than it is time to reflect on this sad bitch of a life we're all tied to.

ORSON'S SHADOW

at Alive Theatre at the Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 494-1014; www.lbplayhouse.org. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. $14-$24.

TRENDZILLA

» MICHELLE WOO

Craftcation!

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I've always wanted to be a crafter. I've tried to make things—snow globes, pillows, wedding favors—but nearly every attempt has ended with me icing my hot-glue-gun burns while yelling, "D-I-WHYYYYY did I think this would be a good idea?!"

That's why I have so much respect for my Martha-style friends, the ones who are able to turn a basket of ribbons into a wreath while a pie made of backyard-grown fruit bakes in their oven. For those creative, skilled and ever-so-patient people, I've found your fantasy camp.

Craftcation is a three-day conference for anyone who wants to start or grow an indie business in the realm of arts, crafts and food. Sponsored by handmade-marketplace Etsy, the gathering takes place March 22 to 25 at the beachfront Crowne Plaza Hotel in Ventura (where *Little Miss Sunshine* was filmed!) and features more than 30 inspiring speakers who've—quite literally—built success with their bare hands.

It's all organized by Delilah Snell and Nicole Stevenson, the gals who put on the popular Patchwork Indie Arts & Crafts Festival each year in Santa Ana and Long Beach. Last year, the OC duo took a road trip to Ventura to scout a potential spot for a future Patchwork event; while sitting in traffic, the two started thinking they could do even more.

"I know a lot of people who are very creative and talented, but when it comes to the business aspects, that's a whole world they haven't experienced," says Snell, the girlfriend of our editor, Gustavo Arellano. "How do you write a proper press release? What's sales tax? How do you decide on pricing? We want to help people understand all this so they can take the next step."

Snell says the lineup of presenters includes "heroes in the industry" such as stitching goddess Jenny Hart, who'll be leading an embroidery workshop; KCRW's *Good Food* host Evan Kleiman, who'll teach you how to make perfect pie dough; Cathy Callahan (a.k.a. Cathy of California), who'll share how to get your crafty ideas published; and novelist/artist Kathy Cano-Murillo of CraftyChica.com, who will be leading a surprise craft workshop. There'll be discussions on copyrighting your ideas so Urban Outfitters doesn't steal them, as well as figuring out whether your business is actually worth the time and money you're putting into it.

But even with all the shop talk, Craftcation is ultimately a craft vacation, a weekend getaway where folks can network and play in a relaxed environment (read: not a craft fair). Think beachside yoga each morning and a dance party at night.

"*Helloooo*, it's a business expense!" Snell says with a laugh.

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MATT PRYOR HOLDS HIS COCK

Matt Pryor Ditches His Band Again

The Get Up Kids singer gears up for the fourth Where's the Band? tour

BY REYAN ALI

There are certain musicians Matt Pryor has gone to bat for who don't seem like much of a stretch. Over various interviews, the singer/songwriter and front man of folk/indie-rock outfit the New Amsterdams and pivotal indie/OG emo band the Get Up Kids has voiced his love for Weezer, Christie Front Drive, Bon Iver, Fugazi and Jimmy Eat World. One name you probably wouldn't expect to add to that list is Miley Cyrus, but in a recent newspaper article covering the current incarnation of the Where's the Band? (WTB) tour, Pryor expressed his partiality for "Party In the USA," a song that was the subject of an in-van discussion during a past tour. "We celebrate all pop music, but when people aren't schooled in the beauty that is pop music, we have to win them over," says Pryor, who swings between good-natured, informative and mildly agitated during this interview.

He clarifies that the culprit who didn't appreciate Cyrus' signature song was a WTB tour manager. "He's a hardcore kid from Long Island and only likes hardcore. But then we got him fist-pumping," he says. "It's cool."

Evidently, Billy Ray's progeny is the kind of thing leaders of notable bands discuss when they share a van for long periods of time. Where's the Band? was originally conceived in 2008 as a way for a few front men to play extensive acoustic sets without having the rest of their bands waiting in the wings. This edition is its fourth.

Traditionally, the tour has included Pryor, Bayside's Anthony Raneri, Saves the Day's Chris Conley and Thrice's Dustin Kensrue as the WTB concept was devised by a booking agent all four had in common. This year, the Early November's Ace Enders and Into It. Over It.'s Evan Weiss were added to the mix.

WTB shows consist of the guitarists doing individual sets, with everyone occasionally teaming up for a group encore or a cover song of some sort. In the past, they've tackled Jawbreaker's "Boxcar," NOFX's "Linoleum" and Darlene Love's "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)." Now, they're trying to figure out "Rainbow Connection" from *The Muppet Movie*.

The continued success of Where's the Band? represents the apex of a long-gestating trend in punk, emo and post-hardcore circles. Since the early 2000s, the front men of several bands—among other non-WTB names, Against Me!, Alkaline Trio, Avail, the Lawrence Arms and Lagwagon—have embarked on acoustic tours or released solo acoustic records. Hot Water Music's Chuck Ragan has even developed the ongoing Revival Tour as a collaborative acoustic revue for various punk players.

When asked why he thinks this proliferation of side projects is happening, Pryor's response is simultaneously playful and hostile. "Well, we get together every year at the International Punk Rock Lead Singers Convention, and we decide what genre of music we'll attempt to tackle next," he says. "Everyone gets their marching orders, and we go out and do it."

Pressed for more of his opinion, he says, "I just started doing it for myself. I have no idea why anybody else did it. I don't really care."

The Lawrence, Kansas-based Pryor has been making acoustic-based records since 2000 as part of the New Amsterdams. His attraction to acoustic music stems from the variety of factors you'd figure. "I had been listening to a lot of Steve Earle at the time, and I was trying to emulate what he does: just a very simple, somewhat-country singer/songwriter with good lyrics," Pryor says, and to a certain degree, he believes he's still emulating Earle.

"I like being loud sometimes, but I like being quiet sometimes," he continues. "I like the simplicity of it. I like having complete control over what I'm doing and not having to take in anybody else's opinion."

Where's the Band? scratches those itches for Pryor. The tour allows him to play his work (the latest of which can be found on the tender, hooky *May Day*) with little hassle while potentially netting new fans who are interested in what kind of acoustic music the other guitarists are making. But Pryor's own reasons for touring with WTB emphasize simple pleasures, such as indulging in "Party In the USA" with some friends. "I like all the people," he says. "It's a fun group of guys to hang out with."

MATT PRYOR
performs as part of Where's the Band? along with Ace Enders, Anthony Raneri, Chris Conley, Dustin Kensrue and Evan Weiss at the Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana; www.yosttheater.com. Tues., 6:30 p.m. $14 in advance; $16 at the door. All ages.

AskExene
» EXENE CERVENKA

Relatable and In Recovery

HI, EXENE: I respect your opinion so much, and I would love to know what you think of my current dilemma. I have been clean and sober and off drugs and alcohol for about three months now. I am working a 12-step program, and it's helping immensely. The thing is, I'm a gay dude, and I am only really meeting straight football guys that I have nothing in common with (except we are all addicts), and I need to meet more gay guys. I have had to cut a lot of people out of my life in order to get better, but I also need to make connections with other people, and those connections aren't being made in the meetings I go to. What do you suggest? I'm also in graduate school to be a therapist, so that's time consuming, as well as satisfying. I just need to I meet more people in recovery I can relate to.

Thanks so much! You are truly the best.

Love, Matt

DEAR MATT: Congratulations on your sobriety! Great move, and 12-step is the best way to go for a lot of people. It has worked for me. This is a very important time in your development. You don't give your age, but you sound young—and social adventures are exciting and life-affirming. However, this is a time for you to focus on yourself. You are in recovery—in a state of transition, emotionally and physically. Study hard, research what interests you, eat healthy, continue with your sobriety program, learn what you can in those meetings from people of all walks of life, and find your commonalities.

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You are making a new start in life, so what do you want your reality to be?

It's not a good time to start a relationship—love yourself first.

Love, Exene

Exene Cervenka is a writer, visual artist and punk-rock pioneer. The OC transplant is the lead singer for X, the Knitters and Original Sinners. If you want to ask the legendary vocalist for advice—on your love life, politics, your musical career, Armageddon, filial relationships, anxiety over 2012—send an email to askexene@ocweekly.com. We will not use your real name if you don't want us to. Please note: By sending an email to askexene@ocweekly.com, you are giving OC Weekly *permission to publish it. Once you submit the letter to us, it will not be possible to take it back.*

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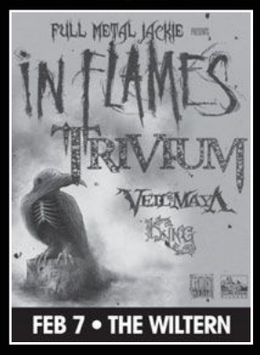
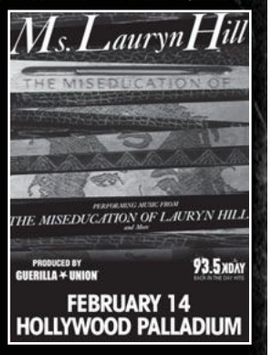


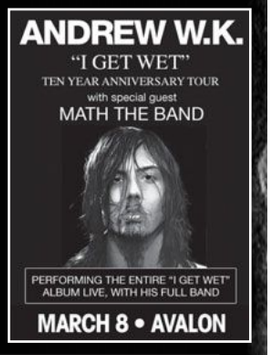
FEB 7 • THE WILTERN



FEBRUARY 14
HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM

FEBRUARY 17 • AVALON

FEBRUARY 17
HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM



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2/3 SEEDLESS
2/4 WILD RECORDS SHOW
Luis and The Wildfires / Gizzelle / and more
2/9 DR. DOG
2/10 ORGY
2/11 DJ QUIK / SUGA FREE
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2/26 8 KALACAS CD RELEASE PARTY
2/28 DUBTROIT 3 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
3/2 IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE
3/3 THE ADOLESCENTS / YOUTH BRIGADE
3/9 GUNGOR
3/10 REVEREND HORTON HEAT / WANDA JACKSON / SUPERSUCKERS / THREE BAD JACKS
3/14 EDWARD SHARPE & THE MAGNETIC ZEROS
3/16 PETER MURPHY
3/19 THE NAKED AND FAMOUS
3/24 BURGER RECORDS PRESENTS
OFF! / THE STRANGE BOYS / WHITE FENCE
3/28 TYGA
4/2 UKF Tour with Gemini & KOAN Sound
4/8 SLAUGHTERHOUSE
4/16 TECH N9NE
4/27 WALTER TROUT

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2/7
THEE SILVER MT. ZION MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA

2/16
NICK WATERHOUSE

2/3 DAVID CHOI
2/6 POLARIS AT NOON
(Every Monday in February)
2/7 THEE SILVER MT. ZION MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA
2/16 NICK WATERHOUSE
2/17 HELL OR HIGHWATER
2/22 SURFER BLOOD
2/23 BUCK 65
2/24 RA RA RIOT / THE SUBMARINES
2/26 THE SOFT PACK
3/1 CLOUD NOTHINGS
3/9 CHRIS WEBBY
3/14 QUEST?ONS
3/16 NOMI / SARAH AULT / JAMESON
3/22 KEVIN DEVINE / THE FRONT BOTTOMS
4/3 CULTS
4/10 YOUTH LAGOON
5/1 TENNIS
5/11 MELVINS
5/12 HANNI EL KHATIB

DAVID CHOI IS FUR OUT!

Beyond the 'Tube

David Choi leaves the Interwebz and steps into the real world

BY MICHELLE WOO

Over the past five years, singer/songwriter David Choi has wooed millions with his lulling voice and charming lyrics. And he's mostly done so while sitting with his guitar in his bedroom in Fullerton. Now, the 25-year-old YouTube star is flipping off the camera switch and performing (in person!) on his Forever & Ever Tour, singing tunes from his third album of the same name. Remember to put on pants for this one.

OC Weekly: *You're often referred to as a "YouTube sensation." How do you feel about that descriptor?*

David Choi: People need to call me something, so I guess I'm okay with it. Though I'd rather not be confined in that little box. People don't take YouTube artists as seriously as major-label artists, but in reality, many are even more serious and playing for a lot more fans. I'd like it if people just listened to the music.

How is performing on tour different from performing in your bedroom?

It's a completely different vibe. There's more adrenalin. I get to meet everyone who has been watching me from behind the computer screen and feel their energy or lack of. It's still hard to release my emotions onstage. It's a really vulnerable thing for me because I get shy in front of people in general. But it's fun to get out of my box, out of my comfort zone. It molds me into a more well-rounded person.

You recently posted on Facebook, "I just wrote a really sad song. I almost made myself cry." Can you tell us more about it?

It has to do with a relationship; that's all I'll say. Whenever I write a song, I wait, like, a year before I release it so the people I've written it about don't know it's about them.

When and where does inspiration for your songs typically strike?

In the car, in the shower, on the toilet, anywhere. It usually comes at night when I'm really, really tired and about to fall asleep. That recently happened, so I got up and wrote and didn't go back to sleep until 6 a.m.

As an online music artist, what are your thoughts on the now-withdrawn antipiracy bills SOPA and PIPA?

On one hand, SOPA is about protecting copyrights, which makes sense to me. But the trade-off is definitely not worth it. It shouldn't be at the expense of freedom. If someone wants to pirate my music, they'll find a way. The people who'll support me will support me. Yes, this is my living, and that's important, but what's more important to me is sharing my music.

> "It's fun to get out of my box, out of my comfort zone. It molds me into a more well-rounded person."

Musical talent runs in your family. Your father recently won the Super Bowl of authoharp, the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship in Pennsylvania.

I'm definitely proud of him. It's a big deal, especially considering he's Asian and the autoharp is even folkier than a banjo. It's kind of funny at the same time.

You're known for your melancholy songs and somber expressions. Are we going to get to see you smile at your show?

[*Laughs*] Yes, I smile in person all the time.

DAVID CHOI
performs at the Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.constellationroom.com. Fri., 9 p.m. $12. All ages.

OC WEEKLY
ZONE PAGES

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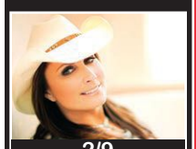
2/2 KELLER WILLIAMS

2/4 LISA LOEB

2/8 GROUNDATION


2/9 TERRI CLARK

2/10 NIKKA COSTA

2/12 ALO

2/2 KELLER WILLIAMS
2/3 RICHIE FURAY
2/4 LISA LOEB / JILL SOBULE
2/7 COMEDY NIGHT
2/8 GROUNDATION
2/9 TERRI CLARK
2/10 NIKKA COSTA
2/11 WHICH ONE'S PINK?
2/12 ALO / NICKI BLUHM & THE GRAMBLERS
2/14 BIG HEAD TODD & THE MONSTERS / ROGER CLYNE
2/15 DON CARLOS
2/16 Coach House Comedy Club feat. DANA DANIELS
2/17 BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY
2/18 "An Evening With" OTTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA
2/19 JAKE SHIMABUKURO
2/22 OC MUSIC AWARDS Best Live Acoustic Finals
2/23 CASH'D OUT (Johnny Cash Birthday Bash)
2/24 AMERICA
2/25 WARRANT
2/26 TOMMY CASTRO
2/28 BOZ SCAGGS
2/29 PETER BRANDON
3/1 BULLETS AND OCTANE
3/3 LEE ROCKER
3/4 COUNTRY JOE McDONALD (A Tribute To Woody Guthrie)
3/7 J BOOG
3/8 TREVOR HALL
3/9 DAVID LINDLEY
3/10 ORANGE COUNTY'S FUNNIEST HOUSEWIVES
3/15 YOUNG DUBLINERS
3/16 ROD PIAZZA
3/17 POXY BOGGARDS

2/14 BIG HEAD TODD

2/17 BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY

2/18 OTTMAR LIEBERT

2/24 AMERICA

3/7 J BOOG

3/29 & 3/30 JONNY LANG

UPCOMING SHOWS

3/23 JOHN WAITE
3/24 MICHAEL SCHENKER with guest ROBIN MCAULEY
3/25 GREGORY ALAN ISAKOV
3/29 JONNY LANG
3/30 JONNY LANG
3/31 TODD SNIDER
4/1 SASHAMON
4/7 KINGS X
4/12 MIKE DOUGHTY The Book of Drugs: Reading, Concert, Q&A
4/13 AMBROSIA
4/14 TAJ MAHAL TRIO
4/21 Y & T
4/22 ALLAN HOLDSWORTH
4/24 BEN KWELLER
4/28 THE ULTIMATE STONES (Rolling Stones Tribute)
5/4 JACK RUSSELL'S GREAT WHITE
5/11 ERIC SARDINAS
5/13 THE BODEANS
5/25 DREAD ZEPPELIN
5/27 DANNY SERAPHINE
6/16 HONK

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ROBERT BROWN
A MESSAGE FROM MANDIE AND RUBY

LocalsOnly
» ED CARRASCO

Sweet Stuff

MANDIE AND RUBY perform at the OC Music Awards Showcase at the Continental Room, 115 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, (714) 469-1879; www.thecontinentalroomfullerton.com. Tues., 7 p.m. Free. 21+.

For more than a year now, singer/songwriters Mandie and Ruby have charmed Fullerton crowds with their sweet, earthy sounds. Now, Ruby Reginaldo's guitar and Mandie Bee's cute, catchy vocals have to impress the judges and crowds at the OC Music Awards showcase. We recently caught up with Bee to talk about what the band have in store.

OC Weekly: *Congratulations on being a finalist for the OC Music Awards. How are you preparing for the nominee show?*

Mandie Bee: Thanks! Many people who've seen us live know that we're just a duo. For the showcase, we wanted to expand the sound just a little more. Our friends Elliot Koenig and Ruben Puebla are backing us with bass and drums. With them, we've been able to do things with our songs that we couldn't do before. We had our first show with them in January at the Copper Door. I dig that place.

How do you feel about your chances of nabbing the award for Best Live Acoustic?

I do think we stand a chance. Whoever decided to add us to the series must have heard something worth showcasing since all we have on our music page are rough demos. I feel we service a different sort of sound that is still easily accessible to the listener and not too offbeat. No matter what happens, we are just happy to have the opportunity to participate.

What's in store for the next year for Mandie and Ruby?

We are writing more original songs together, and there are plans to have a professional recording. I want to make a stop-motion-animation music video, too.

Your Facebook page says the duo began as a "necessity to fulfill the musical needs of both members." How did you start playing together?

Ruby and I met nearly 10 years ago playing in a third-wave ska band. We wrote three songs in a day just for the band, and we both realized how easy it was to work and write together. That type of musical partner can be really hard to find. The band split up, and we stayed in touch over the years. In October 2010, we got together and started writing a few songs. I had a few of my own that we started with, and we did a few covers that we both liked. Then we just started to play out with a good response. Ruby went to school for culinary arts and is working in that field, and I am successfully working in the fashion industry. If we didn't have an outlet to play music, our heads might explode.

What would you say best describes your musical tastes?

Ruby and I have a love for bebop jazz, the blues, old reggae and folky acoustic artists. I think those genres are apparent in our music. I mostly do the singing and lyrics writing, and she works on the different parts of the song in a way that complements my voice and melodies.

You say in your profile that you "need to sing" and that "speaking doesn't explain what I'm trying to say nearly as effectively as it could." How does it impact your songwriting, and what emotions come out when you take the stage?

I can't lie when I'm writing lyrics, and no one can stop me otherwise. Since my instrument is internal, I have to have an emotional connection with it. Otherwise, I'm just singing meaningless words and notes. Singing gives my thoughts and emotions a way out, rather than be bottled up. I'm not a diva; I just want to be heard and share my stories. I'm really lucky to have Ruby believing in what I write about and sharing the same feelings.

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this week

THURSDAY, FEB. 2

AUGUST BURNS RED: House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

JTM & CHAW: Proof Bar, 215 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-953-2660, www.proofbar.com.

KELLER WILLIAMS: The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

MOONSVILLE COLLECTIVE: The Copper Door, 225 1/2 N. Broadway, Santa Ana.

THE OLD FIRM CASUALS; PRESSURE POINT: Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

RON KOBAYASHI TRIO: 6:30 p.m., free. Bayside Restaurant, 900 Bayside Dr., Newport Beach, 949-721-1222, www.baysiderestaurant.com.

SHAPES WITHOUT NAMES; BLACK LANTERN: 9 p.m., $5. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

WE ARE/SHE IS: 9 p.m., $5. The Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-438-3839, www.prospectorlongbeach.com.

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FRIDAY, FEB. 3

BELL STRAY: 7:15 p.m. DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazzas.com.

EMILIE AUTUMN: $15. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, 909-865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us.

HAYMAKER: The Pike Restaurant & Bar, 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com.

KEI AKAGI & FRIENDS: 8 p.m., $16. UC Irvine Winifred Smith Hall, 4000 Mesa Rd., Portola Hills, 949-494-8971.

MELENA AND HER AFRO CUBAN LATIN JAZZ BAND: Steamers Jazz Club, 138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-8800, www.steamerscafe.com.

SEEDLESS; SIMPKIN PROJECT: The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

THE STITCHES; FM BATS; THE SENSITIVE SIDE: 8 p.m., $10. The Juke Joint, 735 N. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-778-1397, www.thejukejointbar.com.

WILD CHILD: Doors tribute, 8:45 p.m., $22.50 in advance. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

SATURDAY, FEB. 4

THE E. FAMILY: 8 & 10 p.m., $28. Harvelle's Long Beach, 206 The Promenade N., Long Beach, 310-395-1676.

HOIST THE COLORS: 9 p.m., $10. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

KEI AKAGI & FRIENDS: 8 p.m., $16. UC Irvine Winifred Smith Hall, 4000 Mesa Rd., Portola Hills, 949-494-8971.

LEVINSTONE: DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazzas.com.

LISA LOEB; JILL SOBULE: $25. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

LIVE LAVA LIVE; MEEKAKITTY; NANALEW & FRIENDS: noon. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

LUIS & THE WILDFIRES: 8 p.m., $15. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

SUNDAY, FEB. 5

BLEEDING THROUGH: 6:30 p.m., $13 in advance. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

THE SURF RATS UK; GRAVEYARD DRIFTERS: 8 p.m., free. The Juke Joint, 735 N. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-778-1397, www.thejukejointbar.com.

MONDAY, FEB. 6

NOMI ABADI: 9 p.m., free. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 1 9th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

POUL PEDERSON: 7 p.m. Renaissance Dana Point, 24701 Del Prado Ave., Dana Point, 949-661-6003, www.renaissance-danapoint.com.

TUESDAY, FEB. 7

THEE SILVER MT. ZION MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA: Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.constellationroom.com.

TULLY JAMES WILKINSON; PARKER MACY; DANNY MAIKA; FOXXHOUND: Orange County Music Awards, night six. The Continental Room, 115 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, 714-469-1879, www.myspace.com/thecontinentalroom.

WHERE'S THE BAND? FEATURING ACE ENDERS; ANTHONY RANERI; CHRIS CONLEY; DUSTIN KENSRUE: 6:30 p.m., $14-$16. The Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, 888-862-9573, www.yosttheater.com.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8

RON ESCHETÉ TRIO: Steamers Jazz Club, 138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-8800, www.steamerscafe.com.

WALTER MOLINA: 7 p.m., free. Utopia Good Food and Fine Arts Restaurant, 445 E. First St., Long Beach, 562-432-6888, www.utopiarestaurant.net.

THURSDAY, FEB. 9

DJ BOBBY TANG: The Pike Restaurant & Bar, 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com.

DR. DOG: 8 p.m., $18. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

FM BATS; FEEDING PEOPLE; LOVELY BAD THINGS: Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

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club*guide

rock

DOLL HUT: 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, 714-533-1286, www.myspace.com/newhut. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Hump Night, free.

KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. **Wed:** 8 p.m., Live Music, with Lars, free.

OC TAVERN: 2369 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-542-8877. **Sun:** 3:30 p.m., Roach's Corner, free.

PERQS: 117 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-960-9996, www.perqs.com. **Fri-Sat:** 9 p.m., Live Band, free.

THE SLIDEBAR ROCK-N-ROLL KITCHEN: 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com. **Tue:** 9 p.m., '80s Night.

jazz

THE ALLEN THEATRE: 3809 Tweedy Blvd., South Gate, 310-810-2929. **Thu:** 9 p.m., First Thursday Jazz Series, $5.

BRIX WINE BAR: 16635 Pacific Coast Hwy., Sunset Beach, 866-357-2749, www.brix4wine.com. **Wed, Fri-Sun:** 8 p.m., Live Band.

BRUSSELS BISTRO: 222 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-376-7955, www.brusselsbistro.com. **Tue:** 7 p.m., Jennifer Hart & Llew Matthews, free. **Wed:** 8 p.m., Dave Goldberg & Duane Allen Trio.

THE CELLAR: 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-495-9000, thecellarlbc.ning.com. **Fri:** 7 p.m., Friday Funk, $10.

STEAMERS JAZZ CLUB: 138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-8800, www.steamerscafe.com. **Sun:** 8 p.m., Evan Stone's Jazz Jam, free.

blues

BACCHUS' SECRET CELLAR WINE SHOPPE AND BAR: 6735 Quail Hill Pkwy., Irvine, 949-502-4600, www.bacchussecretcellar.com. **Thu-Sat:** 6:30 p.m., Live Music.

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Rockin' the Blues, free.

LIQUID LOUNGE: 3522 E. Anaheim St., Anaheim, 562-494-7564, www.liquidloungelongbeach.com. **Mon:** 8 p.m., Blues Jam, hosted by Joey Joel, free.

dance

THE BUTTERFLY LOUNGE: 719 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-2243, www.butterflylounge.com. **Sat:** 9 p.m., $10.

CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m.,

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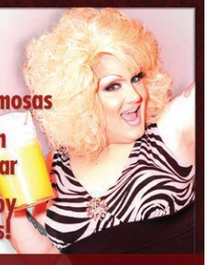

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HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., The Doll House. **Sat:** Heat. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Club Lucky Wild Wednesdays, $5.

HEAT ULTRA LOUNGE: 321 W. Katella Ave., Ste. 214, Anaheim, 714-776-4328, www.heatultraloungeoc.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., Taboo Thursdays. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Kore. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Exclusive, $10. **Sun:** 9 p.m., Cirque.

TIA JUANA'S LONG BAR & GRILL: 14988 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine, 949-551-2998, www.tiajuanas.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., Club Forbidden, $10. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Casa de Tequila, $10.

country

GASLAMP RESTAURANT & BAR: 6251 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-596-4718, www.thegaslamprestaurant.com. **Tue:** 5 p.m., Live Country Music, free.

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Sat:** 2 p.m., Line Dancing Mania, $10.

IN CAHOOTS/CLUB RIO: 1401 S. Lemon, Fullerton, 714-525-9700, www.ocincahoots.com. **Fri:** 5 p.m., Country Fridays, $5. **Wed:** 6 p.m., Redneck Wednesdays, live bands, drink specials and line-dance lessons, free.

reggae

THE PUKA BAR: 710 W. Willow St., Long Beach, 562-997-6896, www.pukabar.com. **Tue:** 9 p.m., Rasta Tuesday, roots, rock and reggae, free.

dj

AVALON BAR: 820 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-515-4650, www.myspace.com/theavalonbar. **Mon:** 9 p.m., Playlist Pop! Bring your iPod, free. **Tue:** 10 p.m., Solid State, free.

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., **COMMONWEALTH LOUNGE:** 112 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-8888, www.commonwealthlounge.com. **Thu:** 5 p.m., Ladies' Night, with DJ Cocoe, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJ Lito.

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THE CROSBY: 400 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-543-3543, www.thisisthecrosby.com. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Shift, free. **Tue:** 10 p.m., Psychic Wave Laboratories, free.

KITSCH BAR: 891 Baker St., Ste. A10, Costa Mesa, 714-546-8580, www.kitschbar.com. **Tue-Thu:** 9 p.m., DJ 5 Disk, free. **Fri:** 9 p.m., DJ Anthony, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJs Jon & Edwin, free.

LA CAVE: 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-646-7944, www.lacaverestaurant.com. **Wed:** 10 p.m., The Underground Lounge, free.

LANDMARK STEAK HOUSE: 3520 E. Coast Hwy., Corona Del Mar, 949-675-5556, www.landmarknewport.com. **Thu-Sat:** 10 p.m., After Dinner DJ.

MOSUN/CLUB M: 680 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-497-5646, www.mosunclubm.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Club Rhythm, $10.

OCEAN AVENUE RESTAURANT AND BREWERY: 237 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-497-3381, www.oceanbrewing.com. **Fri-Sat:** 9:30 p.m., DJ Nights. **Tue:** 9:30 p.m., Throwback Tuesdays.

PROOF BAR: 215 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-953-2660, www.proofbar.com. **Sun:** 9 p.m., Wreck Hall, free.

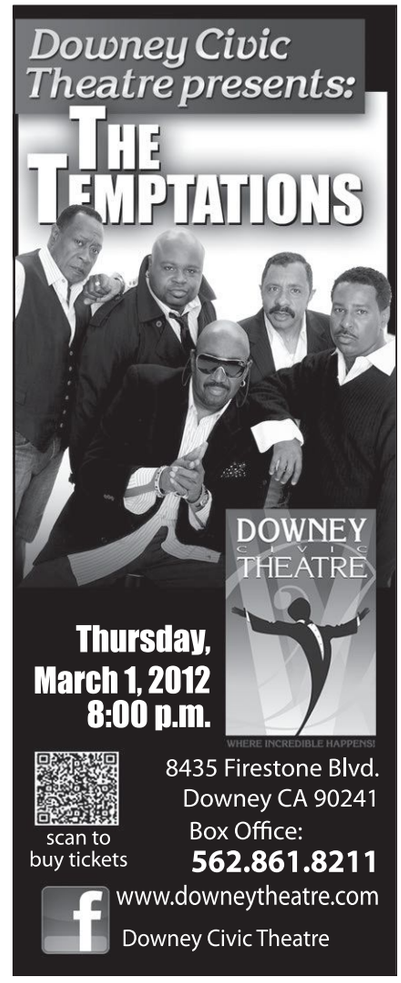
SUTRA LOUNGE: 1870 Harbor Blvd., Ste. 200, Costa Mesa, 949-722-7103, www.sutraoc.com. **Fri:** Sutra Friday.

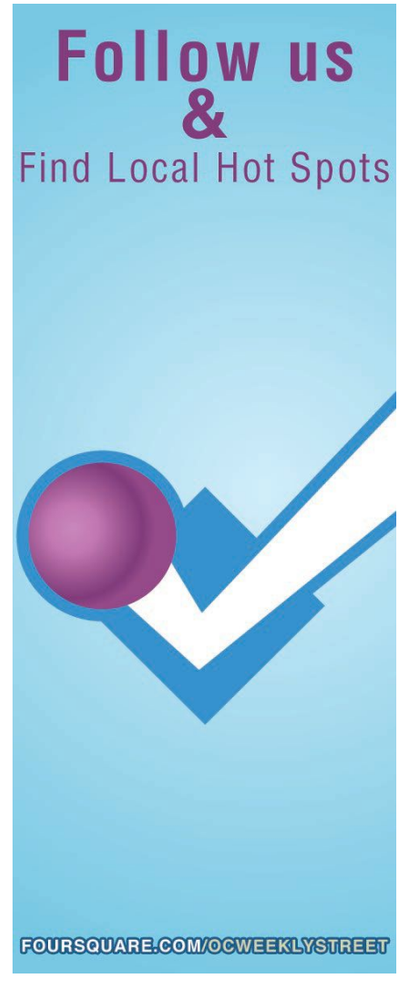
drag

CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Thu:** 8 p.m., The Dreamgirls Revue.

latin

BRAVO NIGHT CLUB: 1490 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-533-2291, www.clubbravo.com. **Fri:** 8 p.m., Metropolis, ladies free before 10 p.m. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Alternative Saturday. **Sun:** 11 p.m., El Chamber. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Splash.





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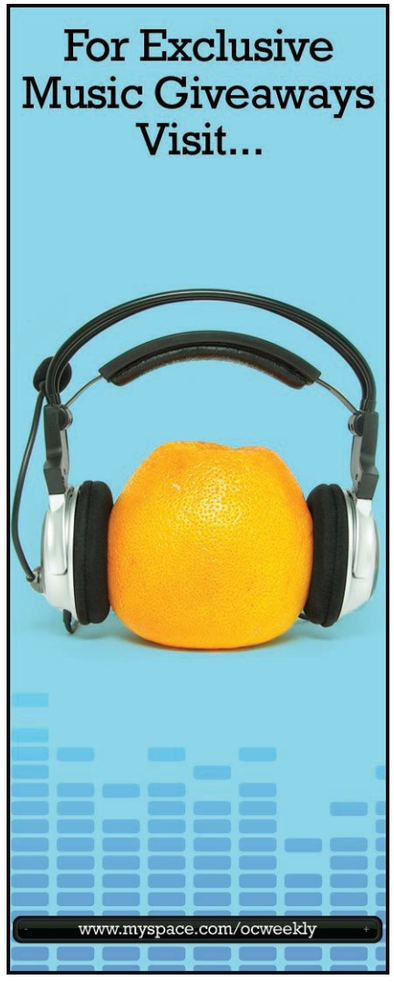
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My husband is a very kinky, submissive man. When we were dating, I found out he had been talking to multiple people online and that he had met up with a professional dom a couple of times. I felt betrayed that he had done this behind my back, even though I had told him I would be down with him seeing a dom. (I even offered to buy him a session for his birthday!)

We got through it, and now our sex life is amazing. I tie him up, I lock his dick up, I dress him up. All I ask in return is that he be honest with me about who he's talking with online. Is that unreasonable? I know he chats with "women" online as a "woman," and I'm okay with that so long as I'm aware of it. But today, I found pictures on his phone of his cock in the chastity device I keep him in. He tried to lie, but he came clean: He was chatting with a woman, it came out that he was a man, and she wanted to see pictures of his cock in his chastity belt.

Why lie? Honest to God, if he would have just told me the day he sent the pictures that he sent someone pictures of his cock, I would be okay with it! I also found another email account he never told me about that he's using when he chats online as a woman. Again, no big deal! But I was under the impression that he used just this one chat program for chatting! Why hide it? My vanilla friends will be no help in this matter, and I feel pretty heartbroken. So I'm asking you.

He Isn't Telling Me Everything

Before I can respond to your question, I've gotta sacrifice a goat to the snooping-is-always-wrong gods, or the snooping-is-always-wrong jihadists will cut my head off. It'll just take a sec: Snooping is always wrong! You invaded your husband's privacy! That was wrong! WRONG!

Moving on . . .

Your husband hit the jackpot when he met you. There aren't a lot of women out there who would embrace—much less marry—a man with his particular collection of kinks. You've been GGG, and all you've asked in return is total transparency and the immediate, real-time disclosure of all outside flirtations and contacts *as they happen*. Why can't the kinky ingrate honor this agreement? Only he knows the answer to that question, but I suspect one of two issues is at play. . . .

Your husband may be ashamed—he may have been brutally shamed in past relationships—about the extent of his kinks *and* about just how much of his time and erotic energy his kinks consume. You may be completely sincere when you tell him you're okay with everything as long as there's immediate and full disclosure. But he may fear that sharing the full extent of his online activities will leave you feeling either squicked-out or threatened. So he downplays and minimizes, disclosing some but not all, because he doesn't want to lose you. If this is the issue, impress upon your husband that hiding shit from you represents a bigger threat to his marriage than full disclosure ever could.

Or . . .

Having and keeping sexual secrets may turn your husband on, and having a secret life could be another one of his kinks. Even if this is the issue, I think you two should be able to come to mutually agreeable terms that accommodate both his desire to have a secret and your need for full disclosure.

Here's a potential compromise: He doesn't keep anything from you, but he doesn't disclose in real time. So long as he's not being unsafe or neglectful, so long as his online activities remain online-only, he can carry on flirting and texting and pic swapping. But every few months, you get to depose his submissive ass. You get to sit him down and ask him questions, and he answers all your questions truthfully and opens up about any current secrets that your questions didn't uncover. This way, he can have all the erotic secrets he wants (he'll just have to make new ones every few months), and you can have the transparency you need (you just won't have it immediately). Good luck.

I'm a 29-year-old gay guy who's not sure where to find what I'm looking for. I'm turned on by the idea of a dominant guy, but most of the guys I attract are pure vanilla. When I look online at the fetish-friendly dating sites, most of the dom guys say shit such as "If you have a list of things you will and won't do, you're not a sub." I want to give up control, but I don't want to be some guy's "bitch." Can there be dominance without degradation? Is a boyfriend who's an equal in life but in charge in the bedroom a unicorn? Where do I look?

Needs Include Controlling Empathy

The dominant boyfriend you're looking for is out there somewhere; you just need to keep looking. And remember: Sometimes, dominant boyfriends are made, not born. By which I mean: Don't rule out the vanilla boys you attract. A guy who likes you is gonna want to meet your needs, sexual and otherwise. If you give a vanilla boy a chance, and if you're honest about what turns you on, you may find that you awaken something in one of those vanilla guys that was there all along—a little dominant streak—but would've lain dormant if it weren't for you.

And you were right to run from those dominant tops who insisted that "true subs" don't have preferences, limits or lists. Not even submissive guys who are into degradation and being someone's "bitch" should fall for—or submit to—that kind of crap.

Your question last week from the guy who "stumbled over" his brother's femdom sex blog reminded me of a funny story: My little brother came out to my conservative-but-not-particularly-religious Jewish parents in 1995. It was rough. Our parents refused to help pay for my wedding because I insisted on inviting my brother *and* his boyfriend. Mom and Dad are now rightly embarrassed by their behavior, and they worship his husband. (It helps that my brother married a doctor—some stereotypes are true.)

Last year, my parents found out that my older brother—their straight son—is kinky. A vindictive ex hacked into his email and sent a letter to everyone in his address book. Big bro has a dungeon, his current girlfriend is his slave, he's made BDSM porn. The email came with pictures no mother would want to see. Mom, completely distraught, called her gay son: "Why can't Josh have a normal relationship!" she cried. "Like yours!"

As far as Mom is concerned, her gay son is normal, and her straight son is a freak. Is that progress, Dan?

Brothers Done Shocking Mom

I don't know if it's progress, but it's hilarious. And I trust you're sticking up for your kinky straight brother now just as you stuck up for your gay brother back in the day.

Be sure to listen to me interrogate Ira Glass on the *Savage Lovecast* (thestranger.com/savage) this week—when he's allowed to make fart jokes, he's a whole new man.

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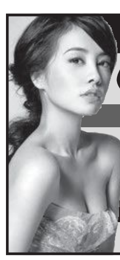

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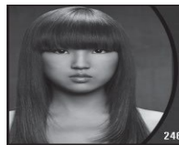
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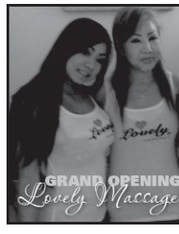
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			1 Mpower OC BOYU.COM & DAVE L PRESENT club LUCKY 18+	2 AUGUST BURNS RED SILVERSTEIN TEXAS IN JULY • I THE BREATHER	3 wild child An Amazing Doors Recreation Live KOFI BAKER'S TRIBUTE TO CREAM	4 DIAL UP TOUR MITCHELL DAVIS & KYLE SIBERT OF LIVELAVALIVE MATINEE SHOW 12PM MEEKAKITTY ALEX CARPENTER NANALEW JASON MUNDAY AS YOU WERE AMHERST AISLE • PIRATES OF POP ROTUS • HESTYN
5 WORLD FAMOUS GOSPEL BRUNCH EVERY SUNDAY AT 11AM CALL BOX OFFICE TO PURCHASE 714-778-2583	6 MEMBER TICKETING IT'S FREE! SIGN UP AND RECEIVE: • PRESALE CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENTS • WEEKLY CONCERT UPDATES • SPECIAL OFFERS AND NOTIFICATIONS GO TO HOBCOM	7 HOUSE OF BLUES SPECIAL EVENTS CALL 714.520.2379	8 DRUGS HIT THE LIGHTS LIKE MOTHS TO FLAMES SPARKS THE RESCUE	9 DETOUR LIVE ACROPOLIS RECORDS SHOWCASE PORTRAIT OF A NIGHTMARE JUICEBOX BANDITS THE ARMIGER • SOLEGION	10 NOCHE ROMANTICA CON 11 RAMON AYALA LOS BRAVOS DEL NORTE Ricardo Duque DJ Malechin Ricardo Duque	
12 NOCHE ROMANTICA CON RAMON AYALA LOS BRAVOS DEL NORTE Ricardo Duque	13 XXV AP 25 ALTERNATIVE PRESS ALTPRESS.COM BORN IN 1985	14 ZAPPA PLAYS ZAPPA WITH SPECIAL GUEST ALLAN HOLDSWORTH	15 SWEET RELIEF PRESENTS... ORANGE COUNTY'S ROCK REVIVAL A.M. OR ABOVE LOW-LIFE MUSIC MALICE AT THREE	16 HOB PRESENTS APPETITE 4 DESTRUCTION (GUNS & ROSES TRIBUTE) TNT (AC/DC TRIBUTE) THE ENEMY (GODSMACK TRIBUTE) CONTRABAND (VELVET REVOLVER TRIBUTE)	17 GOT OC Presents House of 80s Feat. ONE HOT MESS THE REFLEXX SUNSET TEAZE	18 G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE scott h. biram
19 OZOKIDZ MATINEE SHOW 3PM ozomatli	20 SHOW DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE	21 DETOUR LIVE ACROPOLIS RECORDS SHOWCASE SIGNA APARATO PUSH START NOVA	22 HOT CHELLE RAE BEAUTIFUL FREAKS TOUR 2012 with special guests CADY GROVES and ELECTRIC TOUCH	23 Ariana Grande	24 LOCALLY GRUNGE VITALOGY (PEARL JAM TRIBUTE) STONE TEMPLE PIRACY (STP TRIBUTE) FOO FOR LESS (FOO FIGHTERS TRIBUTE) LONGVIEW (GREEN DAY TRIBUTE)	25 LGLB PRESENTS OC Roots & Hops REGGAE FEST 2012 TOMORROWS BAD SEEDS pacific dub • SONO VERO
26 BREAKTHRU ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS	27 SHOWS ARE ALL AGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED	28 SHOWS ARE GENERAL ADMISSION UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED FOR SEATING CONTACT 714.778.2583	29 VOODOO KARAOKE RIGHT LOUNGE LIVE BAND KARAOKE WEDNESDAYS 10:00PM			

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4/20 BERLIN
5/25 TYRONE WELLS WITH SPECIAL GUEST JOE BROOKS

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OC WEEKLY
ZONE PAGES

ZONE 1

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Friday, Feb. 3
Kurt Mahoney/ Reggae
Saturday, Feb. 4
Dominion Status
Sunday, Feb. 5
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New York Giants vs.
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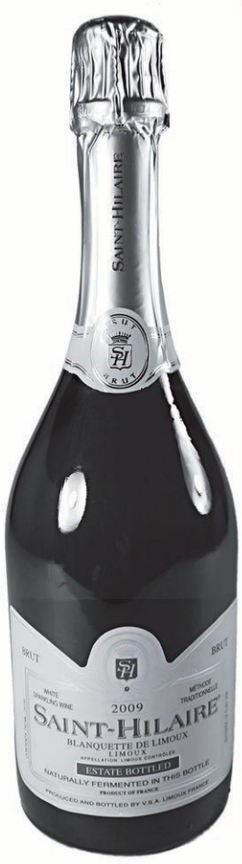
OC WEEKLY
ZONE PAGES

ZONE 2

Hi-Time Wine Cellars



Wine of the Month

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BLANQUETTE DE LIMOUX
SPARKLING WINE $9.95 [#375045]

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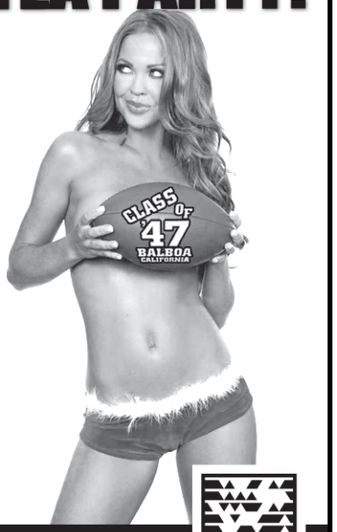

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ZONE 3

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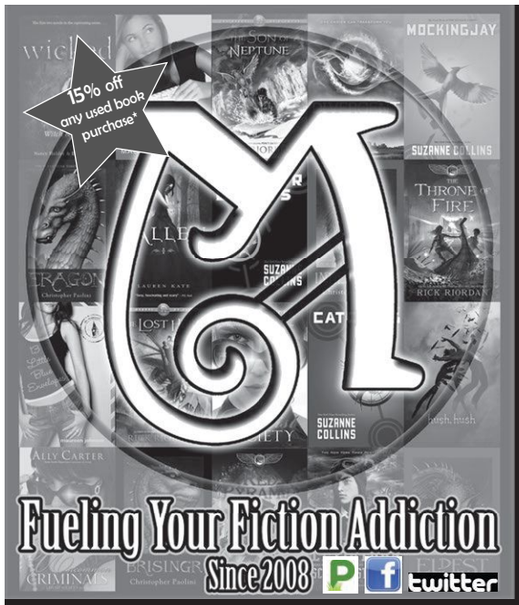

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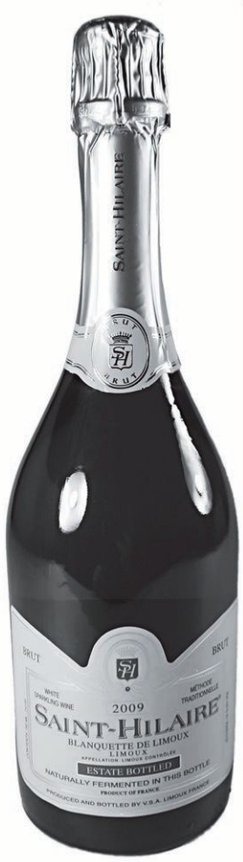

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NEVER SUMMER INDUSTRIES

Snowboarding
Movie Premiere

Performance by
DJ MIKE BLESS

3 DOORS DOWN
THE BETTER LIFE FOUNDATION

AT: Royal Hawaiian • Date: Saturday, Dec. 17th • Time: 8:30pm

331 North Coast Hwy. Laguna Beach, CA 92651 949.494.8001

Event Sponsors:

ABEC 11 · JET American Skateboards · Skatera · SKETRIP · Jägermeister

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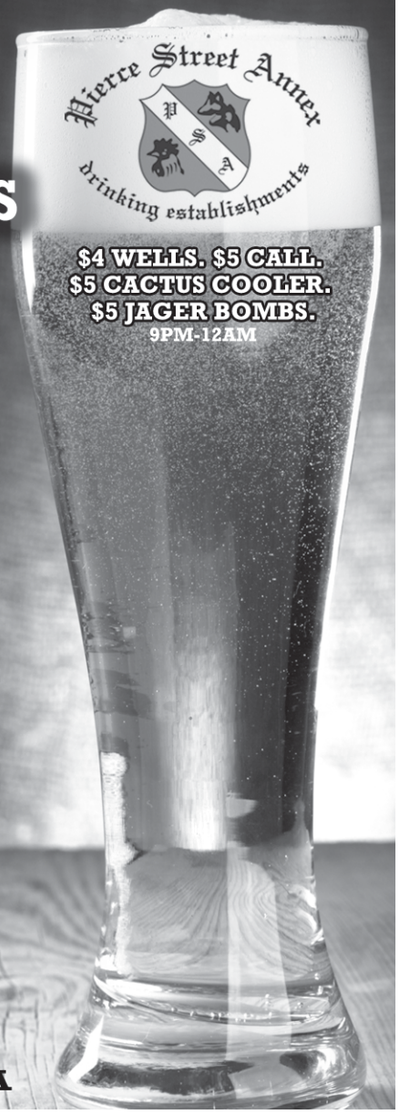

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$25 VOUCHER TO BE USED ON VALENTINES DAY

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3PM SUNDAY FEB 5TH

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W/$3 MARGARITAS

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OC WEEKLY
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